THE WORKS OF *HANNAH MORE*,

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STRICTURES

ON THE

MODERN SYSTEM

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

WITH

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT PREVALENT AMONG WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

May you so raise your character that you may help to make the next age a better thing, and leave posterity in your debt, for the advantage it shall receive by your example.

LORD HALIFAX.

The Hope and Expectation of the Time
Should not ſo laviſh of their preſence be,
Nor ſo enfeoff'd to Popularity,
That being nightly ſwallowed by Men's eyes,
They're ſurfeited with honey, and begin
To loathe the taſte of ſweetneſs.

SHAKESPEARE.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XIV.

The practical use of female knowledge, wi[th] a sketch of the female character, and [a] comparative view of the sexes. - Page

CHAP. XV.

CONVERSATION.—*Hints suggested on the subject.—On the tempers and dispositions to be introduced in it.—Errors to be avoided.—Vanity under various shapes the cause of those errors.* - - 46

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XVI.

e Danger of an ill-directed Sensibility. Page 106

CHAP. XVII.

On dissipation, and the modern habits of fashionable life. - - - 147

CHAP. XVIII.

On public amusements. - - 199

CHAP. XIX.

A worldly spirit incompatible with the spirit of Christianity. - - - 229

CHAP. XX.

On the leading doctrines of Christianity.—The corruption of human nature.—The doctrine of redemption.—The necessity of a change

a change of heart, and of the divine influences to produce that change.—With a sketch of the Christian character. Page 272

CHAP. XXI.

On the duty and efficacy of prayer. - 324

A VIEW

A

VIEW

OF THE

PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT

PREVALENT AMONG

WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE.

CHAP. XIV.

The practical uſe of female knowledge, with a ſketch of the female character, and a comparative view of the ſexes.

THE chief end to be propoſed in cultivating the underſtandings of women, is to qualify them for the practical purpoſes of life. Their knowledge is not often like the learning of men, to be reproduced in ſome literary compoſition, nor ever in any learned profeſſion; but it is to come out in conduct. It is to be exhibited in life and manners. A lady ſtudies, not that

that ſhe may qualify herſelf to become an orator or a pleader; not that ſhe may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the beſt books, not ſo much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement which they furniſh, to the rectification of her principles and the formation of her habits. The great uſes of ſtudy to a woman are to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be inſtrumental to the good of others.

To woman, therefore, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of thoſe more ſober ſtudies, which, not having diſplay for their object, may make her wiſe without vanity, happy without witneſſes, and content without panegyriſts; the exerciſe of which will not bring celebrity, but improve uſefulneſs. She ſhould purſue every kind of ſtudy which will teach her to elicit truth; which will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give preciſion to her ideas; will make an exact mind. She ſhould cultivate every

ſtudy

ſtudy which, inſtead of ſtimulating her ſenſibility, will chaſtiſe it; which will neither create an exceſſive or a falſe refinement; which will give her definite notions; will bring the imagination under dominion; will lead her to think, to compare, to combine, to methodiſe; which will confer ſuch a power of diſcrimination, that her judgment ſhall learn to reject what is dazzling, if it be not ſolid; and to prefer, not what is ſtriking, or bright, or new, but what is juſt. That kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home conſumption than foreign exportation, is peculiarly adapted to women*.

It is becauſe the ſuperficial nature of their education furniſhes them with a falſe and low ſtandard of intellectual excellence,

* May I be allowed to ſtrengthen my own opinion with the authority of Dr. Johnſon, that *a woman cannot have too much arithmetic?* It is a ſolid, practical acquirement, in which there is much uſe and little diſplay; it is a quiet ſober kind of knowledge, which ſhe acquires for herſelf and her family, and not for the world.

 that

that women have too often become ridiculous by the unfounded pretenſions of literary vanity: for it is not the really learned, but the ſmatterers, who have generally brought their ſex into diſcredit, by an abſurd affectation, which has ſet them on deſpiſing the duties of ordinary life. There have not indeed been wanting (but the character is not now common) *precieuſes ridicules*, who, aſſuming a ſuperiority to the ſober cares which ought to occupy their ſex, have claimed a lofty and ſupercilious exemption from the dull and plodding drudgeries

Of this dim ſpeck called earth!

There have not been wanting ill-judging females, who have affected to eſtabliſh an unnatural ſeparation between talents and uſefulneſs, inſtead of bearing in mind that talents are the great appointed inſtruments of uſefulneſs; who have acted as if knowledge were to confer on woman a kind of fantaſtic ſovereignty, which ſhould exonerate

rate her from the diſcharge of female duties; whereas it is only meant the more eminently to qualify her for the performance of them. A woman of real ſenſe will never forget, that while the greater part of her proper duties are ſuch as the moſt moderately gifted may fulfil with credit, (ſince Providence never makes that to be very difficult, which is generally neceſſary,) yet that the moſt highly endowed are equally bound to fulfil them; and let her remember that the humbleſt of theſe offices, performed on Chriſtian principles, are wholeſome for the minds even of the moſt enlightened, as they tend to the caſting down of thoſe "high imaginations" which women of genius are too much tempted to indulge.

For inſtance; ladies whoſe natural vanity has been aggravated by a falſe education, may look down on *œconomy* as a vulgar attainment, unworthy of the attention of an highly cultivated intellect; but this is the falſe eſtimate of a ſhallow

 mind.

mind. Œconomy, ſuch as a woman of fortune is called on to practiſe, is not merely the petty detail of ſmall daily expences, the ſhabby curtailments and ſtinted parſimony of a little mind, operating on little concerns; but it is the exerciſe of a ſound judgment exerted in the comprehenſive outline of order, of arrangement, of diſtribution; of regulations by which alone well-governed ſocieties, great and ſmall, ſubſiſt. She who has the beſt regulated mind will, other things being equal, have the beſt regulated family. As in the ſuperintendance of the univerſe, wiſdom is ſeen in its *effects*; and as in the viſible works of Providence that which goes on with ſuch beautiful regularity is the reſult not of chance but of deſign; ſo that management which ſeems the moſt eaſy is commonly the conſequence of the beſt concerted plan: and a well-concerted plan is ſeldom the offspring of an ordinary mind. A ſound œconomy is a ſound under-ſtanding

ſtanding brought into action; it is calculation realized; it is the doctrine of proportion reduced to practice; it is foreſeeing conſequences, and guarding againſt them; it is expecting contingencies and being prepared for them. The difference is, that to a narrow-minded vulgar œconomiſt the details are continually preſent; ſhe is overwhelmed by their weight, and is perpetually beſpeaking your pity for her labours and your praiſe for her exertions; ſhe is afraid you will not ſee how much ſhe is haraſſed. She is not ſatisfied that the machine moves harmoniouſly, unleſs ſhe is perpetually expoſing every ſecret ſpring to obſervation. Little events and trivial operations engroſs her whole ſoul; while a woman of ſenſe, having provided for their probable recurrence, guards againſt the inconveniencies, without being diſconcerted by the caſual obſtructions which they offer to her general ſcheme. Subordinate expences and incon-

ſiderable retrenchments ſhould not ſwallow up that attention which is better beſtowed on regulating the general ſcale of expence, correcting and reducing an overgrown eſtabliſhment, and reforming radical and growing exceſſes.

Superior talents, however, are not ſo common, as, by their frequency, to offer much diſturbance to the general courſe of human affairs; and many a lady, who tacitly accuſes herſelf of neglecting her ordinary duties becauſe ſhe is a *genius*, will perhaps be found often to accuſe herſelf as unjuſtly as good St. Jerome, when he laments that he was beaten by the angel for being too Ciceronian in his ſtyle.

The truth is, women who are ſo puffed up with the conceit of talents as to neglect the plain duties of life, will not frequently be found to be women of the beſt abilities. And here may the author be allowed the gratification of obſerving, that thoſe women of real genius and extenſive knowledge,

whoſe

whofe friendfhip has conferred honour and happinefs on her own life, have been, in general, eminent for œconomy and the practice of domeftic virtues; and have rifen fuperior to the poor affectation of neglecting the duties and defpifing the knowledge of common life, with which literary women have been frequently, and not always unjuftly, accufed.

A romantic girl with a pretenfion to fentiment, which her ftill more ignorant friends miftake for genius, (for in the empire of the blind the one-eyed are kings,) and poffeffing fomething of a natural ear, has perhaps in her childhood exhaufted all the images of grief, and love, and fancy, picked up in her defultory poetical reading, in an elegy on a fick linnet, or a fonnet on a dead lap-dog; fhe begins thenceforward to be confidered as a prodigy in her little circle; furrounded with fond and flattering friends, every avenue to truth is fhut out; fhe has no opportunity of learning that her fame is derived

derived not from her powers, but her poſition; and that when an impartial critic ſhall have made all the neceſſary deductions, ſuch as—that ſhe is a neighbour, that ſhe is a relation, that ſhe is a female, that ſhe is young, that ſhe has had no advantages, that ſhe is pretty perhaps—when her verſes come to be ſtripped of all their extraneous appendages, and the fair author is driven off her 'vantage ground of partiality, ſex, and favour, ſhe will commonly ſink to the level of ordinary capacities. While thoſe more quiet women, who have meekly ſat down in the humble ſhades of proſe and prudence, by a patient perſeverance in rational ſtudies, riſe afterwards much higher in the ſcale of intellect, and acquire a much larger ſtock of ſound knowledge for far better purpoſes than mere diſplay. And, though it may ſeem a contradiction, yet it will generally be found true, that girls who take to ſcribble are the leaſt ſtudious, the leaſt reflecting, and the leaſt rational. They early acquire

a falſe

a falſe confidence in their own unaſſiſted powers; it becomes more gratifying to their natural vanity to be always pouring out their minds on paper, than to be drawing into them freſh ideas from richer ſources. The original ſtock, ſmall perhaps at firſt, is ſoon ſpent. The ſubſequent efforts grow more and more feeble, if the mind which is continually exhauſting itſelf, be not alſo continually replenished; till the latter compoſitions become little more than reproductions of the ſame ideas, and fainter copies of the ſame images, a little varied and modified perhaps, and not a little diluted and enfeebled.

It will be neceſſary to combat vigilantly that favourite plea of lively ignorance, that ſtudy is an enemy to originality. Correct the judgment, while you humble the vanity of the young untaught pretender, by convincing her that thoſe half-formed thoughts and undigeſted ideas which ſhe conſiders as proofs of her invention, prove only, that ſhe wants taſte and knowledge. That while

while converfation muft polifh and reflection invigorate her ideas, fhe muft improve and enlarge them by the acceffion of various kinds of virtuous and elegant literature; and that the cultivated mind will repay with large intereft the feeds fown in it by judicious ftudy. Let it be obferved, I am by no means *encouraging* young ladies to turn authors; I am only reminding them, that

Authors before they write fhould read;

I am only putting them in mind that to be ignorant is not to be original.

Thefe felf-taught, and felf-dependent fcribblers pant for the unmerited and unattainable praife of fancy and of genius, while they difdain the commendation of judgment, knowledge, and perfeverance which would probably be within their reach. To extort admiration they are accuftomed to boaft of an impoffible rapidity in compofing; and while they infinuate how little time their performances coft them, they intend you fhould infer

how

how perfect they might have made them had they condescended to the drudgery of application: but application with them implies defect of genius. They take superfluous pains to convince you that there was neither learning nor labour employed in the work for which they solicit your praise: Alas! the judicious eye too soon perceives it! though it does *not* perceive that native strength and mother-wit, which in works of real genius make some amends for the negligence, which yet they do not justify. But instead of extolling these effusions for their facility, it would be kind in friends rather to blame them for their crudeness: and when the young candidates for fame are eager to prove in how short a time such a poem has been struck off, it would be well to regret that they had not either taken a longer time, or refrained from writing at all; as in the former case the work would have been less defective, and in the latter the writer would have discovered more humility and self-distrust.

A general

A general capacity for knowledge, and the cultivation of the underſtanding at large, will always put a woman into the beſt ſtate for directing her purſuits into thoſe particular channels which her deſtination in life may afterwards require. But ſhe ſhould be carefully inſtructed that her talents are only a means to a ſtill higher attainment, and that ſhe is not to reſt in them as an end; that merely to exerciſe them as inſtruments for the acquiſition of fame and the promotion of pleaſure, is ſubverſive of her delicacy as a woman, and contrary to the ſpirit of a chriſtian.

Study, therefore, is to be conſidered as the means of ſtrengthening the mind, and of fitting it for higher duties, juſt as exerciſe is to be conſidered as an inſtrument for ſtrengthening the body for the ſame purpoſe. And the valetudinarian who is religiouſly punctual in the obſervance of his daily rides to promote his health, and reſts in that as an end, without ſo much as intending to make his improved health an

an inſtrument of increaſed uſefulneſs, acts on the ſame low and ſelfiſh principle with her who reads merely for pleaſure and for fame, without any deſign of devoting the more enlarged and invigorated mind to the glory of the Giver.

But there is one *human* conſideration which would perhaps more effectually tend to damp in an aſpiring woman the ardours of literary vanity (I ſpeak not of real genius, though there the remark often applies) than any which ſhe will derive from motives of humility, or propriety, or religion; which is, that in the judgment paſſed on her performances, ſhe will have to encounter the mortifying circumſtance of having her ſex always taken into account; and her higheſt exertions will probably he received with the qualified approbation, *that it is really extraordinary for a woman.* Men of learning, who are naturally inclined to eſtimate works in proportion as they appear to be the reſult of art, ſtudy, and inſtitution, are inclined to

confider even the happier performances of the other fex as the fpontaneous productions of a fruitful but fhallow foil; and to give them the fame kind of praife which we beftow on certain fallads, which often draw from us a fort of wondering commendation; not indeed as being worth much in themfelves, but becaufe by the lightnefs of the earth, and a happy knack of the gardener, thefe indifferent creffes fpring up in a night, and therefore we are ready to wonder they are no worfe.

As to men of fenfe, however, they need be the lefs hoftile to the improvement of the other fex, as they themfelves will be fure to be gainers by it; the enlargement of the female underftanding being the moft likely means to put an end to thofe petty and abfurd contentions for equality which female fmatterers fo anxioufly maintain. I fay fmatterers, for between the firft clafs of both fexes the queftion is much more rarely and always more temperately agitated. Co-operation and not competition is

indeed the clear principle we wiſh to ſee reciprocally adopted by thoſe higher minds in each ſex which really approximate the neareſt to each other. The more a woman's underſtanding is improved, the more obviouſly ſhe will diſcern that there can be no happineſs in any ſociety where there is a perpetual ſtruggle for power; and the more her judgment is rectified, the more accurate views will ſhe take of the ſtation ſhe was born to fill, and the more readily will ſhe accommodate herſelf to it; while the moſt vulgar and ill-informed women are ever moſt inclined to be tyrants, and thoſe always ſtruggle moſt vehemently for power, who feel themſelves at the greateſt diſtance from deſerving it, and who would not fail to make the worſt uſe of it when attained. Thus the weakeſt reaſoners are always the moſt poſitive in debate; and the cauſe is obvious, for *they* are unavoidably driven to maintain their pretenſions by violence who want arguments and reaſons to prove that they are in the right.

 There

There is this ſingular difference between a woman vain of her wit, and a woman vain of her beauty; that the beauty, while ſhe is anxiouſly alive to her own fame, is often indifferent enough about the beauty of other women; and provided ſhe herſelf is ſure of your admiration, ſhe does not inſiſt on your thinking that there is another handſome woman in the world: while ſhe who is vain of her genius, more liberal at leaſt in her vanity, is jealous for the honour of her whole ſex, and contends for the equality of their pretenſions as a body, in which ſhe feels that her own are involved as an individual. The beauty vindicates her own rights, the wit, the rights of women; the beauty fights for herſelf, the wit for a party; and while the more ſelfiſh though more moderate beauty

would but be Queen for life,

the public ſpirited wit ſtruggles to abrogate the Salique law of intellect, and to enthrone

a whole ſex of Queens.

At

At the revival of letters in the ſixteenth and the following century, the controverſy. about this equality was agitated with more warmth than wiſdom; and the proceſs was inſtituted and carried on, on the part of the female complainant, with that ſort of acrimony which always raiſes a ſuſpicion of the juſtice of any cauſe; for violence commonly implies doubt, and invective indicates weakneſs rather than ſtrength. The novelty of that knowledge which was then burſting out from the dawn of a long dark night, kindled all the ardours of the female mind, and the ladies fought zealouſly for a portion of that renown which the reputation of learning was beginning to beſtow. Beſides their own pens, they had for their advocates all thoſe needy authors who had any thing to hope from their power, their riches, or their influence; and ſo giddy did ſome of theſe literary ladies become by the adulation of their numerous panegyriſts, that through theſe repeated draughts of inebriating praiſe, they even loſt their

 former

former moderate meaſure of ſobermindedneſs, and grew to deſpiſe the equality for which they had before contended, as a ſtate below their merit and unworthy of their acceptance. They now ſcorned to litigate for what they already thought they ſo obviouſly poſſeſſed, and nothing ſhort of the palm of ſuperiority was at length conſidered as adequate to their growing claims. When court-ladies and princeſſes were the candidates, they could not long want champions to ſupport their cauſe; by theſe champions female authorities were produced as if paramount to facts; quotations from theſe female authors were conſidered as proofs, and their point-blank aſſertions ſtood for ſolid and irrefragable arguments. In thoſe paraſites who offered this homage to female genius, the homage was the effect neither of truth, nor of juſtice, nor of conviction. It aroſe rather out of gratitude, or it was a reciprocation of flattery; it was ſometimes vanity, it was often diſtreſs, which prompted the adula-

tion; it was the want of a patroneſs; it was the want of a dinner. When a lady, and eſpecially as it then often happened, when a lady who was noble or royal ſat with gratifying docility at the foot of a profeſſor's chair; when ſhe admired the philoſopher, or took upon her to protect the theologian, whom his rivals among his own ſex were tearing to pieces, what could the grateful profeſſor or delighted theologian do leſs in return than make the apotheoſis of her who had had the penetration to diſcern his merit and the ſpirit to reward it? Thus in fact it was not ſo much *her* vanity as his own that he was often flattering, though ſhe was the dupe of her more deep and deſigning panegyriſt.

But it is a little unfortunate for the perpetuity of that fame which the encomiaſt had made over to his patroneſs, in the never-dying records of his verſes and orations, that in the revolution of a century or two the very names of the flattered are now almoſt as little known as the works

of the flatterers. *Their memorial is perished with them**. An instructive lesson, reminding us, that whoever bestows, or assumes a reputation disproportioned to the merit of the claimant, will find that reputation as little durable as it is solid. For this literary warfare which engaged such troops of the second-hand authors of the age in question in such continual skirmishes, and not a few pitched battles; which provoked so much rancour, so many volumes, and so little wit; so much vanity, so much flattery, and so much invective, produced no useful or lasting effect. Those who promised themselves that their names would outlive "one half of round eter-"nity," did not reach the end of the century in which the boast was made; and those who prodigally offered the incense, and those who greedily snuffed up its fumes, are buried in the same blank oblivion!

* See Brantome, Pere le Moine, Monf. Thomas, &c.

But

But when the temple of Janus ſeemed to have been cloſed, or when at worſt the peace was only occaſionally broken by a ſlight and random ſhot from the hand of ſome ſingle ſtraggler; it appears that though open rebellion had ceaſed, yet the female claim had not been renounced; it had only (if we may change the metaphor) lain in abeyance. The conteſt has recently been revived with added fury, and with multiplied exactions; for whereas the ancient demand was merely a kind of imaginary prerogative, a ſpeculative importance, a mere titular right, a ſhadowy claim to a few unreal acres of Parnaſſian territory; the revived contention has taken a more ſerious turn, and brings forward political as well as intellectual pretenſions; and among the innovations of this innovating period, the impoſing term of *rights* has been produced to ſanctify the claim of our female pretenders, with a view not only to rekindle in the minds of women a preſumptuous vanity diſhonourable to their

ſex, but produced with a view to excite in their hearts an impious diſcontent with the poſt which God has aſſigned them in this world.

But *they* little underſtand the true intereſts of woman who would lift her from the important duties of her allotted ſtation, to fill with fantaſtic dignity a loftier but leſs appropriate niche. Nor do they underſtand her true happineſs, who ſeek to annihilate diſtinctions from which ſhe derives advantages, and to attempt innovations which would depreciate her real value. Each ſex has its proper excellencies, which would be loſt were they melted down into the common character by the fuſion of the new philoſophy. Why ſhould we do away diſtinctions which increaſe the mutual benefits and enhance the ſatisfactions of life? Whence, but by carefully preſerving the original marks of difference ſtamped by the hand of the Creator, would be derived the ſuperior advantage of mixed ſociety? Is either ſex ſo abounding in perfection

fection as to be independent on the other for improvement? Have men no need to have their rough angles filed off, and their harshnesses and asperities smoothed and polished by assimilating with beings of more softness and refinement? Are the ideas of women naturally so *very* judicious, are their principles so *invincibly* firm, are their views so *perfectly* correct, are their judgments so *completely* exact, that there is occasion for no additional weight, no superadded strength, no increased clearness, none of that enlargement of mind, none of that additional invigoration which may be derived from the aids of the stronger sex? What identity could advantageously supersede such an enlivening opposition, such an interesting variety of character? Is it not then more wise as well as more honourable to move contentedly in the plain path which Providence has obviously marked out to the sex, and in which custom has for the most part rationally confirmed them, rather than to stray awk-

awkwardly, unbecomingly, and unſucceſs-fully, in a forbidden road? Is it not de-ſirable to be the lawful poſſeſſors of a leſſer domeſtic territory, rather than the tur-bulent uſurpers of a wider foreign empire? to be good originals, than bad imitators? to be the beſt thing of one's own kind, rather than an inferior thing even if it were of an higher kind? to be excellent women rather than indifferent men?

Is the author then undervaluing her own ſex?—No. It is her zeal for their true *in-tereſts* which leads her to oppoſe their ima-ginary *rights*. It is her regard for their happineſs which makes her endeavour to cure them of a feveriſh thirſt for a fame as unattainable as inappropriate; to guard them againſt an ambition as little becoming the delicacy of their female character as the meekneſs of their religious profeſſion. A little Chriſtian humility and ſober-minded-neſs are worth all the empty renown which was ever obtained by the miſapplied ener-gies of the ſex; it is worth all the wild

metaphyſical diſcuſſion which has ever been obtruded under the name of reaſon and philoſophy; which has unſettled the peace of vain women, and forfeited the reſpect of reaſonable men. And the moſt elaborate definition of ideal rights, and the moſt hardy meaſures for attaining them, are of leſs value in the eyes of a truly amiable woman, than "that meek and quiet "ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of "great price."

Natural propenſities beſt mark the deſignations of Providence as to their application. The fin was not more clearly beſtowed on the fiſh that he ſhould ſwim, nor the wing given to the bird that he ſhould fly, than ſuperior ſtrength of body, and a firmer texture of mind was given to man, that he might preſide in the deep and daring ſcenes of action and of council; in the complicated arts of government, in the contention of arms, in the intricacies and depths of ſcience, in the buſtle of commerce, and in thoſe profeſſions which demand

mand a higher reach, and a wider range of powers. The true value of woman is not diminiſhed by the imputation of inferiority in thoſe talents which do not belong to her, of thoſe qualities in which her claim to excellence does not conſiſt. She has other requiſites, better adapted to anſwer the end and purpoſes of her being, from "HIM who does all things well;" who ſuits the agent to the action; who accommodates the inſtrument to the work.

Let not then aſpiring, becauſe ill-judging woman, view with pining envy the keen ſatyriſt, hunting vice through all the doublings and windings of the heart; the ſagacious politician, leading ſenates, and directing the fate of empires; the acute lawyer, detecting the obliquities of fraud; and the ſkilful dramatiſt, expoſing the pretenſions of folly; but let her ambition be conſoled by reflecting, that thoſe who thus excel, to all that Nature beſtows and books can teach, muſt add beſides that conſummate knowledge of the world to which a

delicate

delicate woman has no fair avenues, and which even if ſhe could attain, ſhe would never be ſuppoſed to have come honeſtly by.

In almoſt all that comes under the deſcription of polite letters, in all that captivates by imagery, or warms by juſt and affecting ſentiment, women are excellent. They poſſeſs in a high degree that delicacy and quickneſs of perception, and that nice diſcernment between the beautiful and defective which comes under the denomination of taſte. Both in compoſition and action they excel in details; but they do not ſo much generalize their ideas as men, nor do their minds ſeize a great ſubject with ſo large a graſp. They are acute obſervers, and accurate judges of life and manners, as far as their own ſphere of obſervation extends; but they deſcribe a ſmaller circle. A woman ſees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her own garden, whence ſhe makes an exact ſurvey of home ſcenes, but takes not in that

that wider range of diſtant proſpects which he who ſtands on a loftier eminence commands. Women have a certain *tact* which often enables them to feel what is juſt more inſtantaneouſly than they can define it. They have an intuitive penetration into character, beſtowed on them by Providence, like the ſenſitive and tender organs of ſome timid animals, as a kind of natural guard to warn of the approach of danger beings who are often called to act defenſively.

In ſumming up the evidence, if I may ſo ſpeak, of the different capacities of the ſexes, one may venture, perhaps, to aſſert, that women have equal *parts*, but are inferior in *wholeneſs* of mind, in the integral underſtanding: that though a ſuperior woman may poſſeſs ſingle faculties in equal perfection, yet there is commonly a juſter proportion in the mind of a ſuperior man: that if women have in an equal degree the faculty of fancy which creates images,

images, and the faculty of memory which collects and ſtores ideas, they ſeem not to poſſeſs in equal meaſure the faculty of comparing, combining, analyſing, and ſeparating theſe ideas; that deep and patient thinking which goes to the bottom of a ſubject; nor that power of arrangement which knows how to link a thouſand connected ideas in one dependent train, without loſing ſight of the original idea out of which the reſt grow, and on which they all hang. The female too, wanting ſteadineſs in her intellectual purſuits, is perpetually turned aſide by her characteriſtic taſtes and feelings. Woman in the career of genius, is the Atalanta, who will riſk loſing the race by running out of her road to pick up the golden apple; while her male competitor, without, perhaps, poſſeſſing greater natural ſtrength or ſwiftneſs, will more certainly attain his object, by direct purſuit, by being leſs expoſed to the ſeductions of extraneous beauty, and will

win

win the race, not by excelling in ſpeed, but by deſpiſing the bait*.

Here it may be juſtly enough retorted, that, as it is allowed the education of women is ſo defective, the alleged inferiority of their minds may be accounted for on that ground more juſtly than by aſcribing it to their natural make. And, indeed, there is ſo much truth in the remark, that till women ſhall be more reaſonably educated, and till the native growth of their mind ſhall ceaſe to be ſtinted and cramped, we have no juſter ground for pronouncing that their underſtanding has already reached its higheſt attainable point, than the Chineſe would have for affirming that their women have attained to the greateſt

* What indiſpoſes even reaſonable women to concede in theſe points is, that the weakeſt man inſtantly lays hold on the conceſſion; and, on the mere ground of ſex, plumes himſelf on his own individual ſuperiority; inferring that the ſillieſt man is ſuperior to the firſt rate woman.

poſſible

possible perfection in walking, while the first care is, during their infancy, to cripple their feet. At least, till the female sex are more carefully instructed, this question will always remain as undecided as to the *degree* of difference between the masculine and feminine understanding, as the question between the understandings of blacks and whites; for until men and women, and until Africans and Europeans are put more nearly on a par in the cultivation of their minds, the shades of distinction, whatever they be, between their native abilities can never be fairly ascertained.

And when we see (and who will deny that we see it frequently?) so many women nobly rising from under all the pressure of a disadvantageous education and a defective system of society, and exhibiting the most unambiguous marks of a vigorous understanding, a correct judgment, and a sterling piety, it reminds us of those shining lights which have now and then burst out through all the "darkness visible" of the Romish

Romiſh church, have diſincumbered themſelves from the gloom of ignorance, ſhaken off the fetters of prejudice, and with a noble energy riſen ſuperior to all the errors of a corrupt theology.

But whatever characteriſtical diſtinctions may exiſt; whatever inferiority may be attached to woman from the ſlighter frame of her body, or the more circumſcribed powers of her mind; from a leſs ſyſtematic education, and from the ſubordinate ſtation ſhe is called to fill in life; there is one great and leading circumſtance which raiſes her importance, and even eſtabliſhes her equality. *Chriſtianity* has exalted women to true and undiſputed dignity; in Chriſt Jeſus, as there is neither "rich nor poor," "bond "nor free," ſo there is neither "male nor "female." In the view of that immortality, which is brought to light by the goſpel, ſhe has no ſuperior. "Women" (to borrow the idea of an excellent prelate) "make up one half of the human race; "equally with men redeemed by the blood

"of

"of Chriſt." In this their true dignity conſiſts; here their beſt pretenſions reſt; here their higheſt claims are allowed.

All diſputes then for pre-eminence between the ſexes have only for their object the poor precedence for a few ſhort years, the attention of which would be better devoted to the duties of life and the intereſts of eternity.

And as the final hope of the female ſex is equal, ſo are their preſent means, perhaps, more favourable, and their opportunities, often, leſs obſtructed than thoſe of the other ſex. In their Chriſtian courſe women have every ſuperior advantage, whether we conſider the natural make of their minds, their leiſure for acquiſition in youth, or their ſubſequently leſs expoſed mode of life. Their hearts are naturally ſoft and flexible, open to impreſſions of love and gratitude; their feelings tender and lively; all theſe are favourable to the cultivation of a devotional ſpirit. Yet while we remind them of theſe native benefits,

nefits, they will do well to be on their guard left this very foftnefs and ductility lay them more open to the feductions of temptation and error.

They have in the native conftitution of their minds, as well as from the relative fituations they are called to fill, a certain fenfe of attachment and dependence, which is peculiarly favourable to religion. They feel, perhaps, more intimately the want of a ftrength which is not their own. Chriftianity brings that fuperinduced ftrength; it comes in aid of their confcious weaknefs, and offers the only true counterpoife to it. "Woman, be "thou healed of thine infirmity," is ftill the heart-cheering language of a gracious Saviour.

Women alfo bring to the ftudy of Chriftianity fewer of thofe prejudices which perfons of the other fex too often early contract. Men, from their claffical education, acquire a ftrong partiality for the manners of Pagan antiquity, and the docu-

documents of Pagan philoſophy: this, together with the impure taint caught from the looſe deſcriptions of their poets, and the licentious language even of their hiſtorians, (in whom we reaſonably look for more gravity,) often weakens the good impreſſions of young men, and at leaſt confuſes their ideas of piety, by mixing them with ſo much heterogeneous matter. Their very ſpirits are imbued all the week with the impure follies of a depraved mythology; and it is well if even on Sundays they can hear of the "true God, and Jeſus "Chriſt whom he has ſent." While women, though ſtruggling with the ſame natural corruptions, have commonly leſs knowledge to unknow, and fewer ſchemes to unlearn; they have not to ſhake off the pride of ſyſtem, and to diſencumber their minds from the ſhackles of favourite theories: they do not bring from the porch or the academy any "oppoſitions "of ſcience" to obſtruct their reception of

of thoſe pure doctrines taught on the Mount: doctrines which ought to find a readier entrance into minds uninfected with the pride of the ſchool of Zeno, or the libertiniſm of that of Epicurus.

And as women are naturally more affectionate than faſtidious; they are likely both to read and to hear with a leſs critical ſpirit than men: they will not be on the watch to detect errors, ſo much as to gather improvement; they have ſeldom that hardneſs which is acquired by dealing deeply in books of controverſy, but are more inclined to the peruſal of works which quicken the devotional feelings, than to ſuch as awaken a ſpirit of doubt and ſcepticiſm. They are leſs diſpoſed to conſider the compoſitions they read, as materials on which to ground objections and anſwers, than as helps to faith and rules of life. With theſe advantages, however, they ſhould alſo bear in mind that their more eaſily received impreſſions being often leſs abiding, and their reaſon leſs

lefs open to conviction by means of the ftrong evidences which exift in favour of the truth of Chriftianity, " they ought, " therefore, to give the more earneft heed " to the things which they have heard, " left at any time they fhould let them " flip." Women are alfo, from their domeftic habits, in poffeffion of more leifure and tranquillity for religious purfuits, as well as fecured from thofe difficulties and ftrong temptations to which men are expofed in the tumult of a buftling world. Their lives are more regular and uniform, lefs agitated by the paffions, the bufineffes, the contentions, the fhock of opinions, and the oppofition of interefts which divide fociety, and convulfe the world.

If we have denied them the poffeffion of talents which might lead them to excel as lawyers, they are preferved from the peril of having their principles warped by that too indifcriminate defence of right and wrong, to which the profeffors of the law are expofed. If we fhould queftion their title to

eminence as mathematicians, they are happily exempt from the danger to which men devoted to that ſcience are ſaid to be liable; namely, that of looking for demonſtration on ſubjects, which by their very nature, are incapable of affording it. If they are leſs converſant in the powers of nature, the ſtructure of the human frame, and the knowledge of the heavenly bodies, than philoſophers, phyſicians, and aſtronomers; they are, however, delivered from the error into which many of each of theſe have ſometimes fallen, I mean from the fatal habit of reſting in ſecond cauſes, inſtead of referring all to the firſt; inſtead of making "the heavens declare the glory of "God, and proclaim his handy work;" inſtead of concluding, when they obſerve "how fearfully and wonderfully we are "made, marvellous are thy works O Lord, "and that my ſoul knoweth right well."

And let the weaker ſex take comfort, that in their very exemption from privileges, which they are ſometimes fooliſhly diſpoſed

to envy, consists not only their security, but their happiness. If they enjoy not the distinctions of public life and high offices, do they not escape the responsibility attached to them, and the mortification of being dismissed from them? If they have no voice in deliberative assemblies, do they not avoid the load of duty inseparably connected with such privileges? Preposterous pains have been taken to excite in women an uneasy jealousy, that their talents are neither rewarded with public honours nor emoluments in life; nor with inscriptions, statues, and mausoleums after death. It has been absurdly represented to them as an hardship, that while they are expected to perform duties, they must yet be contented to relinquish honours, and must unjustly be compelled to renounce fame while they must sedulously labour to deserve it.

But for Christian women to act on the low views suggested to them by their ill-judging panegyrists; for Christian women

to

to look up with a giddy head and a throbbing heart to honours and remunerations, so littled suited to the wants and capacities of an immortal spirit, would be no less ridiculous than if Christian heroes should look back with envy on the old pagan rewards of ovations, oak garlands, parsley crowns, and laurel wreaths. The Christian hope more than reconciles Christian women to these petty privations, by substituting a nobler prize for their ambition, "the prize of the high-calling of God in "Christ Jesus;" by substituting, for that popular and fluctuating voice, which may cry, "Hosanna," and "crucify" in a breath, that "favour of God which is "eternal life."

If women should lament it as a disadvantage attached to their sex, that their character is of so delicate a texture as to be sullied by the slightest breath of calumny, and that the stain once received is indelible; yet are they not led by that very circumstance as if instinctively to shrink from all those

thoſe irregularities to which the loſs of character is ſo certainly expected to be attached; and to ſhun with keener circumſpection the moſt diſtant approach towards the confines of danger? Let them not lament it as an hardſhip, but account it to be a privilege, that the delicacy of their ſex impels them more ſcrupulouſly to avoid the very "appearance of evil;" let them not regret that the conſciouſneſs of their danger ſerves to ſecure their purity, by placing them at a greater diſtance, and in a more deep intrenchment from the evil itſelf.

Though it be one main object of this little work, rather to lower than to raiſe any deſire of celebrity in the female heart; yet I would awaken it to a juſt ſenſibility to honeſt fame: I would call on women to reflect that our religion has not only made them heirs to a bleſſed immortality hereafter, but has greatly raiſed them in the ſcale of being here, by lifting them to an importance in ſociety unknown to the moſt poliſhed ages of antiquity. The religion

ligion of Chriſt has even beſtowed a degree of renown on the ſex beyond what any other religion ever did. Perhaps there are hardly ſo many virtuous women (for I reject the long catalogue whom their vices have transferred from oblivion to infamy) named in all the pages of Greek or Roman Hiſtory, as are handed down to eternal fame, in a few of thoſe ſhort chapters with which the great Apoſtle to the Gentiles has concluded his epiſtles to his converts. Of "devout and honour- "able women," the ſacred ſcriptures record "not a few." Some of the moſt affecting ſcenes, the moſt intereſting tranſactions, and the moſt touching converſations which are recorded of the Saviour of the world, paſſed with women. *Their* examples have ſupplied ſome of the moſt eminent inſtances of faith and love. *They* are the firſt remarked as having "miniſ- "tered to him of their ſubſtance." *Theirs* was the praiſe of not abandoning their deſpiſed Redeemer when he was led to

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execution, and under all the hopeleſs circumſtances of his ignominious death; *they* appear to have been the *laſt* attending at his tomb, and the *firſt* on the morning when he aroſe from it. *Theirs* was the privilege of receiving the earlieſt conſolation from their riſen Lord; *theirs* was the honour of being firſt commiſſioned to announce his glorious reſurrection. And even to have furniſhed heroic confeſſors, devoted ſaints, and unſhrinking martyrs to the Church of Chriſt, has not been the excluſive honour of the bolder ſex.

CHAP. XV.

CONVERSATION.—*Hints ſuggeſted on the ſubject.—On the tempers and diſpoſitions to be introduced in it.—Errors to be avoided.—Vanity under various ſhapes the cauſe of thoſe errors.*

THE ſexes will naturally deſire to appear to each other, ſuch as each believes the other will beſt like; their converſation will act reciprocally; and each ſex will wiſh to appear more or leſs rational as they perceive it will more or leſs recommend them to the other. It is therefore to be regretted, that many men, even of diſtinguiſhed ſenſe and learning, are too apt to conſider the ſociety of ladies, as a ſcene in which they are rather to reſt their underſtandings, than to exerciſe them; while ladies, in return, are too much addicted to make their court by lending themſelves to

to this ſpirit of trifling; they often avoid making uſe of what abilities they have; and affect to talk below their natural and acquired powers of mind; conſidering it as a tacit and welcome flattery to the underſtanding of men, to renounce the exerciſe of their own.

Now ſince taſte and principles thus mutually operate; men, by keeping up converſation to its proper ſtandard, would not only call into exerciſe the powers of mind which women actually poſſeſs; but would even awaken in them new energies which they do not know they poſſeſs; and men of ſenſe would find their account in doing this, for their own talents would be more highly rated by companions who were better able to appreciate them, and they would be receiving as well as imparting improvement. And, on the other hand, if young women found it did not often recommend them in the eyes of thoſe whom they moſt wiſh to pleaſe, to be frivolous and ſuperficial, they would become more ſedulous

in correcting their own habits. Whenever fashionable women indicate a relish for instructive conversation, men will not be apt to hazard what is vain, or unprofitable; much less will they ever presume to bring forward what is loose or corrupt, where some signal has not been previously given, that it will be acceptable, or at least that it will be pardoned.

Ladies commonly bring into company minds already too much relaxed by petty pursuits, rather than overstrained by intense application. The littleness of the employments in which they are usually engaged, does not so exhaust their spirits as to make them stand in need of that relaxation from company which severe application or overwhelming business makes requisite for studious or public men. The due consideration of this circumstance might serve to bring the sexes more nearly on a level in society; and each might meet the other half way; for that degree of lively and easy conversation which is a necessary

ceſſary refreſhment to the learned and the buſy, would not decreaſe in pleaſantneſs by being made of ſo rational a caſt as would yet ſomewhat raiſe the minds of women, who commonly ſeek ſociety as a ſcene of pleaſure, not as a refuge from intenſe thought or exhauſting labour.

It is a diſadvantage even to thoſe women who keep the beſt company, that it is unhappily almoſt eſtabliſhed into a ſyſtem, by the other ſex, to poſtpone every thing like inſtructive diſcourſe till the ladies are withdrawn; their retreat ſerving as a kind of ſignal for the exerciſe of intellect. And in the few caſes in which it happens that any important diſcuſſion takes place in their preſence, they are for the moſt part conſidered as having little intereſt in ſerious ſubjects. Strong truths, whenever ſuch happen to be addreſſed to them, are either diluted with flattery, or kept back in part, or ſoftened to their taſte; or if the ladies expreſs a wiſh for information on any point, they are put off with a compliment, inſtead

inſtead of a reaſon. They are reminded of their beauty when they are ſeeking to inform their underſtanding, and are conſidered as beings who muſt be contented to behold every thing through a falſe medium, and who are not expected to ſee and to judge of things as they really exiſt.

Do we then wiſh to ſee the ladies, whoſe want of opportunities leaves them ſo incompetent on many points, and the modeſty of whoſe ſex ought never to allow them even to be as ſhining as they are able;—do we wiſh to ſee them take the lead in metaphyſical diſquiſitions? Do we wiſh them to plunge into the depths of theological polemics,

> And find no end in wand'ring mazes loſt?

Do we wiſh them to revive the animoſities of the Bangorian controverſy, or to decide the proceſs between the Jeſuits and the five propoſitions of Janſenius? Do we wiſh to enthrone them in the profeſſor's chair, to deliver oracles, harangues, and diſſertations?

tions? to weigh the merits of every new production in the scales of Quintilian, or to regulate the unities of dramatic composition *by Aristotle's clock?* Or renouncing those foreign aids, do we desire to behold them vain of a native independence of soul, inflated with their original powers, labouring to strike out sparks of wit, with a restless anxiety to shine, which generally fails, and with an anxious affectation to please, which never pleases?

Diseurs de bons mots, fades caracteres!

All this be far from them!—But we *do* wish to see the conversation of well-bred women rescued from vapid common place, from uninteresting tattle, from trite and hackneyed communications, from frivolous earnestness, from false sensibility, from a warm interest about things of no moment, and an indifference to topics the most important; from a cold vanity, from the ill concealed overflowings of self-love, exhibiting itself under the smiling mask of

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an engaging flattery, and from all the factitious manners of artificial intercourse. We *do* wish to see the time passed in polished and intelligent society, considered among the beneficial, as well as the pleasant portions of our existence, and not consigned over, as it too frequently is, to premeditated trifling, to empty dulness, to unmeaning levity, to systematic unprofitableness. Let me not, however, be misunderstood: it is not meant to prescribe that ladies should affect to discuss lofty subjects, so much as to suggest that they should bring good sense, simplicity, precision, and truth, to the discussion of those common subjects, of which, after all, both the business and the conversation of mankind must be in a great measure made up.

It is too well known how much the dread of imputed pedantry keeps off every thing that verges towards *learned*, and the terror of imputed enthusiasm frightens away any thing that approaches to *serious* conversation; so that the two topics which

peculiarly diſtinguiſh us, as rational and immortal beings, are by general conſent in a good degree baniſhed from the ſociety of rational and immortal creatures. But we might almoſt as conſiſtently give up the comforts of fire becauſe a few perſons have been burnt, and the benefit of water becauſe ſome others have been drowned, as relinquiſh the enjoyments of intellectual, and the bleſſings of religious intercourſe, becauſe the learned world has ſometimes been infeſted with pedants, and the religious world with fanatics.

As in the momentous times in which we live it is next to impoſſible to paſs an evening in company but the talk will ſo inevitably revert to politics, that, without any premeditated deſign, every one preſent ſhall infallibly be able to find out to which ſide the other inclines; why, in the far higher concern of eternal things, ſhould we ſo carefully ſhun every offered opportunity of bearing even a caſual teſtimony to the part we eſpouſe in religion? Why, while

we make it a ſort of point of conſcience to leave no doubt on the mind of a ſtranger, whether we adopt the party of Pitt or Fox, ſhall we chuſe to leave it very problematical whether we belong to God or Baal? Why, in religion, as well as in politics, ſhould we not act like people who, having their all at ſtake, cannot forbear now and then adverting for a moment to the object of their grand concern, and dropping, at leaſt, an incidental intimation of the ſide to which they belong?

Even the news of the day, in ſuch an eventful period as the preſent, may lend frequent occaſions to a woman of principle to declare, without parade, her faith in a moral Governor of the world; her truſt in a particular Providence; her belief in the Divine Omnipotence; her confidence in the power of God, in educing good from evil, in his employing wicked nations, not as favourites but inſtruments; her perſuaſion that preſent ſucceſs is no proof of the Divine

favour; in ſhort, ſome intimation that ſhe is not aſhamed to declare that her mind is under the influence of chriſtian faith: that ſhe is ſteadily governed by an unalterable principle, of which no authority is too great to make her aſhamed, which no occaſion is too trivial to call into exerciſe. A general concurrence in habitually exhibiting this ſpirit of decided faith and holy truſt, would inconceivably diſcourage that pert and wakeful infidelity which is ever on the watch to produce itſelf: and, as we have already obſerved, if women, who derive authority from their rank or talents, did but reflect how their ſentiments are repeated, and how their authority is quoted, they would be ſo on their guard, that general ſociety might become a ſcene of profitable communication and common improvement; and the young, who are looking for models on which to faſhion themſelves, would become aſhamed and afraid of exhibiting any thing like levity, or ſcepticiſm, or prophaneneſs.

 Let

Let it be underſtood, that it is not meant to intimate that ſerious ſubjects ſhould make up the bulk of converſation; this, as it is impoſſible, would alſo often be improper. It is not intended to ſuggeſt that they ſhould be abruptly introduced, or unſuitably prolonged; but only that they ſhould not be ſyſtematically ſhunned, nor the brand of fanaticiſm be fixed on the perſon who, with whatever propriety, hazards the introduction of ſuch ſubjects. It is evident, however, that this general dread of ſerious topics ariſes a good deal from an ignorance of the true nature of chriſtianity; people avoid it on the principle expreſſed by the vulgar phraſe of the danger of playing with edge tools. They conceive of religion as ſomething which involves controverſy, and diſpute; ſomething either melancholy or miſchievous; ſomething of an inflammatory nature, which is to ſtir up ill humours and hatred; they conſider it as a queſtion which has two ſides; as of a ſort of party-buſineſs which ſets friends at variance. So much

much is this notion adopted, that I have ſeen announced two works of conſiderable merit, in which it was ſtipulated as an attraction, that the ſubject of religion, as being likely to excite anger and party-diſtinctions, ſhould be carefully excluded. Such is the worldly idea of the ſpirit of that religion, whoſe direct object it was to bring "peace and good will to men!"

Women too little live or converſe up to the ſtandard of their underſtandings; and however we have deprecated affectation or pedantry, let it be remembered, that both in reading and converſing, the underſtanding gains more by ſtretching than ſtooping. If by exerting itſelf it may not attain to all it deſires, yet it will be ſure to gain ſomething. The mind, by always applying itſelf to objects below its level, contracts its dimenſions, and ſhrinks itſelf to the ſize, and lowers itſelf to the level, of the object about which it is converſant: while the underſtanding which is active and aſpiring, expands and raiſes itſelf, grows ſtronger by exerciſe,

exercife, larger by diffufion, and richer by communication.

But the tafte of general fociety is not favourable to improvement. The ferioufnefs with which the moft frivolous fubjects are agitated, and the levity with which the moft ferious are difpatched, bear a pretty exact proportion to each other. Society too is a fort of magic lanthorn; the fcene is perpetually fhifting. In this inceffant change we muft

Catch, e'er fhe fall, the Cynthia of the minute;—

and the fafhion of the prefent minute, evanefcent probably like its rapid precurfors, while in many it leads to the cultivation of real knowledge, has alfo not unfrequently led even the gay and idle to the affectation of mixing a fprinkling of fcience with the mafs of diffipation. The ambition of appearing to be well-informed breaks out even in thofe triflers who will not fpare time from their pleafurable purfuits fufficient for acquiring that knowledge, of which, however,

ever, the reputation is ſo deſirable. A little ſmattering of philoſophy often dignifies the purſuits of their day, without reſcuing them from the vanities of the night. A courſe of lectures (that admirable aſſiſtant for enlightening the underſtanding) is not ſeldom reſorted to as a means to ſubſtitute the appearance of knowledge for the fatigue of application. But where this valuable help is attended merely like any other public exhibition, as a faſhionable purſuit, and is not furthered by correſpondent reading at home, it often ſerves to ſet off the reality of ignorance with the affectation of ſkill. But inſtead of producing in converſation a few reigning ſcientific terms, with a familiarity and readineſs, which

Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned ſmile,

would it not be more modeſt even for thoſe who are better informed, to avoid the common uſe of technical terms whenever the idea can be as well conveyed without them? For it argues no real ability to know

know the *names* of tools; the ability lies in knowing their *uſe:* and while it is in the thing, and not in the term, that real knowledge conſiſts, the charge of pedantry is attached to the uſe of the term, which would not attach to the knowledge of the ſcience.

In the faculty of ſpeaking well, ladies have ſuch a happy promptitude of turning their ſlender advantages to account, that there are many who, though they have never been taught a rule of ſyntax, yet, by a quick facility in profiting from the beſt books and the beſt company, hardly ever violate one; and who often exhibit an elegant and perſpicuous arrangement of ſtyle, without having ſtudied any of the laws of compoſition. Every kind of knowledge which appears to be the reſult of obſervation, reflection, and natural taſte, ſits gracefully on women. Yet on the other hand it ſometimes happens, that ladies of no contemptible natural parts are too ready to produce, not only pedantic expreſſions, but

but crude and unfounded notions; and ſtill oftener to bring forward obvious and hackneyed remarks, which float on the very ſurface of a ſubject, with the impoſing air of recent invention, and all the vanity of conſcious diſcovery. This is becauſe their acquirements have not been worked into their minds by early inſtruction; what knowledge they have gotten ſtands out as it were above the very ſurface of their minds, like the *appliquée* of the embroiderer, inſtead of having been interwoven with the growth of the piece, ſo as to have become a part of the ſtuff. They did not, like men, acquire what they know while the texture was forming. Perhaps no better preventive could be deviſed for this literary vanity, than *early* inſtruction: that woman would be leſs likely to be vain of her knowledge who did not remember the time when ſhe was ignorant. Knowledge that is *burnt in*, if I may ſo ſpeak, is ſeldom obtruſive, rarely impertinent.

Their

Their reading alſo has probably conſiſted much in abridgments from larger works, as was obſerved in a former chapter; this makes a readier talker, but a ſhallower thinker, than the peruſal of books of more bulk. By theſe ſcanty ſketches, their critical ſpirit has been excited, while their critical powers have not been formed; for in thoſe crippled mutilations they have ſeen nothing of that juſt proportion of parts, that ſkilful arrangement of the plan, and that artful diſtribution of the ſubject, which, while they prove the maſter hand of the writer, ſerve alſo to form the taſte of the reader, far more than a disjointed ſkeleton, or a beautiful feature or two, can do. The inſtruction of women is alſo too much drawn from the ſcanty and penurious ſources of ſhort writings of the eſſay kind: this, when it compriſes the beſt part of a perſon's reading, makes a ſmatterer and ſpoils a ſcholar; for though it ſupplies current talk, yet it does not make a full mind; it does not furniſh a ſtorehouſe of materials to ſtock the underſtanding, nei-

ther

ther does it accuſtom the mind to any trains of reflection: for the ſubjects, beſides being each ſuccinctly, and, on account of this brevity, ſuperficially treated, are diſtinct and diſconnected: they ariſe out of no concatenation of ideas, nor any dependent ſeries of deduction. Yet on this pleaſant but deſultory reading, the mind which has not been trained to ſeverer exerciſe, loves to repoſe itſelf in a ſort of creditable indolence, inſtead of ſtretching its energies in the wholeſome labour of conſecutive inveſtigation *.

I am not diſcouraging ſtudy at a late period of life, or even cenſuring ſlender knowledge; information is good at whatever period and in whatever degree it be acquired. But in ſuch caſes it ſhould be

* The writer cannot be ſuppoſed deſirous of depreciating the value of thoſe many beautiful periodical eſſays which adorn our language. But, perhaps, it might be better to regale the mind with them ſingly, at different times, than to read, at the ſame ſitting, a multitude of ſhort pieces on diſſimilar and unconnected topics, *by way of getting through the book.*

attended with peculiar humility: and the new poſſeſſor ſhould bear in mind, that what is freſh to her has been long known to others; and ſhe ſhould therefore be aware of advancing as novel that which is common, and obtruding as rare that which every body poſſeſſes. Some ladies are eager to exhibit proofs of their reading, though at the expence of their judgment, and will introduce in converſation quotations quite irrelevant to the matter in hand, becauſe they happen at the inſtant to recur to their recollection, or were, perhaps, found in the book they have juſt been reading. Unappropriate quotations or ſtrained analogy may ſhew reading, but they do not ſhew taſte. That juſt and happy alluſion which knows by a word how to awaken a correſponding image, or to excite in the hearer the idea which fills the mind of the ſpeaker, ſhews leſs pedantry and more taſte than bare citations; and a mind imbued with elegant knowledge will inevitably be-

tray

tray the opulence of its refources, even on topics which do not relate to fcience or literature. It is the union of parts and acquirements, of fpirit and modefty, which produces the indefinable charm of converfation. Well-informed perfons will eafily be difcovered to have read the beft books, though they are not always detailing lifts of authors; for a mufter roll of names may be learnt from the catalogue as well as from the library. Though honey owes its exquifite tafte to the fragrance of the fweeteft flowers, yet the fkill of the little artificer appears in this, that the delicious ftores are fo admirably worked up, and there is fuch a due proportion obferved in mixing them, that the perfection of the whole confifts in its not tafting individually of the rofe, the jeffamine, the carnation, or any of thofe fweets of the very effence of all which it is compounded. But true judgment will difcover the infufion which true modefty will not difplay; and even common fubjects paffing through a culti-

 vated

vated underſtanding, borrow a flavour of its richneſs. A power of apt ſelection is more valuable than any power of general retention; and an appoſite remark, which ſhoots ſtraight to the point, demands a higher capacity of mind than an hundred ſimple acts of memory; for the buſineſs of the memory is only to ſtore up materials which the underſtanding is to mix and work up with its native faculties, and which the judgment is to bring out and apply. But young women who have more vivacity than ſenſe, and more vanity than vivacity, of en riſk the charge of abſurdity to eſcape that of ignorance, and will even compare two authors who are totally unlike, rather than miſs the occaſion to ſhew that they have read both.

Among the arts to ſpoil converſation ſome ladies poſſeſs that of ſuddenly diverting it from the channel in which it was beneficially flowing, becauſe ſome *word* uſed by the perſon who was ſpeaking has accidentally ſtruck out a new train of thinking

in their own minds, and not becaufe the general *idea* expreffed has ftruck out a correfponding idea, which fort of collifion is indeed the way of eliciting the true fire. Young ladies, whofe fprightlinefs has not been difciplined by a correct education, confider how things may be prettily faid, rather than how they may be prudently or feafonably fpoken; and willingly hazard being thought wrong, or rafh, or vain, for the chance of being reckoned pleafant. The graces of rhetoric captivate them more than the jufteft deductions of reafon; when they have no arms they ufe flowers, and to repel an argument, they arm themfelves with a metaphor. Thofe alfo who do not aim fo high as eloquence, are often furprized that you refufe to accept of a prejudice inftead of a reafon; they are apt to take up with a probability inftead of a demonftration, and cheaply put you off with an affertion, when you are requiring a proof. The mode of education which renders them light in affumption, and fuper-

 ficial

ficial in reaſoning, renders them alſo impatient of oppoſition; and if they happen to poſſeſs beauty, and to be vain of it, they may be tempted to conſider that this is an additional proof of their being always in the right. In this caſe, they will not aſk you to ſubmit your judgment to the force of their argument, ſo much as to the authority of their charms.

The ſame fault in the mind, ſtrengthened by the ſame error, (a neglected education,) leads lively women often to pronounce on a queſtion without examining it: on any given point they ſeldomer *doubt* than men; not becauſe they are more clear-ſighted, but becauſe they have not been accuſtomed to look into a ſubject long enough to diſcover its depths and its intricacies; and not diſcerning its difficulties, they conclude that it has none. Is it a contradiction to ſay, that they ſeem at once to be quick-ſighted and ſhort-ſighted? What they ſee at all, they commonly ſee at once; a little difficulty diſ-

courages

courages them; and, having caught a hasty glimpse of a subject, they rush to this conclusion, that either there is no more to be seen, or that what is behind will not pay them for the trouble of searching. They pursue their object eagerly, but not regularly; rapidly, but not pertinaciously; for they want that obstinate patience of investigation which grows stouter by repulse. What they have not attained, they do not believe exists; what they cannot seize at once, they persuade themselves is not worth having.

Is a subject of moment started in company? While the more sagacious are deliberating on its difficulties, and viewing it under all its aspects, in order to form a competent judgment before they decide; you will often find the most superficial woman present determine the matter, without hesitation. Not seeing the perplexities in which the question is involved, she wonders at the want of penetration in the man whose very penetration keeps him silent.

 She

She ſecretly deſpiſes the dull perception and ſlow deciſion of him who is patiently *untying* the knot which ſhe fancies ſhe exhibits more dexterity by *cutting*. By this ſhallow ſprightlineſs, of which vanity is commonly the radical principle, the moſt ignorant perſon in the company leads the converſation, while he whoſe opinion was beſt worth having is diſcouraged from delivering it, and an important ſubject is diſmiſſed without diſcuſſion, by inconſequent flippancy and voluble raſhneſs. It is this abundance of florid talk, from ſuperficial matter, which has brought on ſo many of the ſex the charge of *inverting* the Apoſtle's precept, and being *ſwift* to *ſpeak*, *ſlow* to *hear*.

If the great Roman Orator could obſerve, that ſilence was ſo important a part of converſation, that "there was not only "an art but an eloquence in it," how peculiarly does the remark apply to the modeſty of youthful females! But the ſilence of liſtleſs and vapid ignorance, and the animated ſilence of ſparkling intelligence, are two things

things almoſt as obviouſly diſtinct, as the wiſdom and the folly of the tongue. An inviolable and marked attention may ſhew that a woman is pleaſed with a ſubject, and an illuminated countenance may prove that ſhe underſtands it, almoſt as unequivocally as language itſelf could do; and this, with a modeſt queſtion, which indicates at once rational curioſity and becoming diffidence, is in many caſes as large a ſhare of the converſation as it is decorous for feminine delicacy to take. It is alſo as flattering an encouragement as men of ſenſe and politeneſs require, for purſuing uſeful topics in the preſence of women, which they would be more diſpoſed to do, did they oftener gain by it the attention which it is natural to wiſh to excite; and did women themſelves diſcover that deſire of improvement which liberal-minded men are pleaſed with communicating.

Yet do we not ſometimes ſee an impatience to be heard (nor is it a *feminine* failing only) which good-breeding can ſcarcely

ſubdue? And even when theſe incorrigible talkers are compelled to be quiet, is it not evident that they are not ſilent becauſe they are liſtening to what is ſaid, but becauſe they are thinking of what they themſelves ſhall ſay when they can ſeize the firſt lucky interval for which they are ſo narrowly watching? The very turn of their countenance betrays that they do not take the ſlighteſt degree of intereſt in any thing that is ſaid by others, except with a view to lie in wait for any little chaſm in the diſcourſe, on which they may lay hold, and give vent to their own overflowing vanity.

But converſation muſt not be conſidered as a ſtage for the diſplay of our talents, ſo much as a field for the exerciſe and improvement of our virtues; as a means for promoting the glory of our Creator, and the good and happineſs of our fellow-creatures. Well-bred and intelligent Chriſtians are not, when they join in ſociety, to conſider themſelves as entering the liſts like intellectual prize-fighters, in order to exhibit

bit their own vigour and dexterity, to difcomfit their adverfary, and to bear away the palm of victory. Truth and not triumph fhould be the invariable object; and there are few occafions in life, in which we are more unremittingly called upon to watch ourfelves narrowly, and to refift the affaults of various temptations, than in converfation. Vanity, jealoufy, envy, mifreprefentation, refentment, difdain, levity, impatience, infincerity, and pride, will in turn folicit to be gratified. Conftantly to ftruggle againft the defire of being thought more wife, more witty, and more knowing, than thofe with whom we affociate, demands the inceffant exertion of Chriftian vigilance; a vigilance which the generality are far from fufpecting to be at all neceffary in the intercourfe of common fociety. On the contrary, cheerful converfation is rather confidered as an exemption and releafe from watchfulnefs, than as an additional obligation to it. But a circumfpect foldier of Chrift will never be off his poft; even

when he is not called to public combat by the open aſſaults of his great ſpiritual enemy, he muſt ſtill be acting as a centinel, for the dangers of an ordinary Chriſtian will ariſe more from theſe little ſkirmiſhes which are daily happening in the warfare of human life, than from thoſe pitched battles which more rarely occur, and for which he will probably think it ſufficient to be armed.

But ſociety, as was obſerved before, is not a ſtage on which to throw down our gauntlet, and prove our own proweſs by the number of falls we give to our adverſary; ſo far from it, true good-breeding as well as Chriſtianity, conſiders as an indiſpenſable requiſite for converſation, the diſpoſition to bring forward to notice any talent in others, which their own modeſty, or conſcious inferiority, would lead them to keep back. To do this with effect requires a penetration exerciſed to diſcern merit, and a generous candour which delights in drawing it out. There are few

who cannot converfe tolerably on fome one topic; what that is, we fhould try to difcover, and in general introduce that topic, though to the fuppreffion of any one on which we ourfelves are fuppofed to excel: and however fuperior we may be in other refpects to the perfons in queftion, we may, perhaps, in that particular point, improve by them; or if we do not gain information, we fhall at leaft gain a wholefome exercife to our humility and felf-denial; we fhall be reftraining our own impetuofity; we fhall, if we take this courfe on juft occafions only, and fo as to beware left we gratify the vanity of others, be giving confidence to a doubting, or cheerfulnefs to a depreffed fpirit. And to place a juft remark, hazarded by the diffident, in the moft advantageous point of view; to call the attention of the inattentive, the forward, and the felf-fufficient, to the unobtrufive merit of fome quiet perfon in the company, who, though of much worth, is perhaps of little note; thefe are requi-

fites

ſites for converſation, leſs brilliant, but far more valuable, than the power of exciting burſts of laughter by the brighteſt wit, or of extorting admiration by the moſt poignant ſallies of ridicule.

Wit is, of all the qualities of the female mind, that which requires the ſevereſt caſtigation; yet the temperate exerciſe of this faſcinating quality throws an additional luſtre round the character of an amiable woman; for to manage with diſcreet modeſty a dangerous talent, confers a higher praiſe than can be claimed by thoſe from whom the abſence of the talent removes the temptation to miſemploy it. To women, wit is a peculiarly perilous poſſeſſion, which nothing ſhort of the ſober-mindedneſs of Religion can keep in ſubjection; and perhaps there is ſcarcely any one order of human beings that requires the powerful curb of Chriſtian control more than women whoſe genius has this tendency. Intemperate wit craves admiration as its natural aliment; it lives on flat-

tery

tery as its daily bread. The profeffed wit is a hungry beggar, fubfifting on the extorted alms of perpetual panegyric; and like the vulture in the Grecian fable, the appetite increafes by indulgence. Simple truth and fober approbation become taftelefs and infipid to the palate daily vitiated by the delicious poignancies of exaggerated commendation. Under the above reftrictions, however, wit may be fafely and pleafantly exercifed; for *chaftifed wit* is an elegant and well-bred, and not unfeminine quality. But *humour*, efpecially if it degenerate into imitation, or mimicry, is very fparingly to be ventured on; for it is fo difficult totally to detach it from the fufpicion of buffoonery, that a woman will be likely to lofe more of that delicacy which is her appropriate grace, and without which every other quality lofes its charm, than fhe will gain in another way in the eyes of the judicious, by the moft fuccefsful difplay of humour.

A woman of genius, if fhe have true humility, will not defpife thofe leffer arts

which ſhe may not happen to poſſeſs, even tho' ſhe be ſometimes put to the trial of having her ſuperior mental endowments overlooked, while ſhe is held cheap for being deſtitute of ſome more ordinary accompliſhment. Though the rebuke of Themiſtocles* was juſt to one who thought that ſo great a general and politician ſhould employ his time like an effeminate Lutiniſt, yet he would probably have made a different anſwer if he had happened to underſtand muſic.

If it be true that ſome women are too apt to affect brilliancy and diſplay in their own diſcourſe, and to undervalue the more humble pretenſions of leſs ſhowy characters; it muſt be confeſſed alſo, that ſome of more ordinary abilities are now and then guilty of the oppoſite error, and fooliſhly affect to value themſelves on not making uſe of the underſtanding they really poſſeſs; and affect to be thought even

* "Can you play on the lute?" ſaid a certain Athenian to Themiſtocles. "No," replied he, "but "I can make a little village a great city."

more

more ſilly than they are. They exhibit no ſmall ſatisfaction in ridiculing women of high intellectual endowments, while they exclaim with much affected humility, and much real envy, that "they are thankful "*they* are not geniuſes." Now, though we are glad to hear gratitude expreſſed on any occaſion, yet the want of ſenſe is really no ſuch great mercy to be thankful for; and it would indicate a better ſpirit, were they to pray to be enabled to make a right uſe of the moderate underſtanding they poſſeſs, than to expoſe with a too viſible pleaſure the imaginary or real defects of their more ſhining acquaintance. Women of the brighteſt faculties ſhould not only "bear thoſe faculties meekly," but ſhould conſider it as no derogation, cheerfully to fulfil thoſe humbler offices which make up the buſineſs and the duties of common life, while they ſhould always take into the account the nobler exertions as well as the higher reſponſibility attached to higher gifts. In the mean time women of lower attain-

attainments ſhould exert to the utmoſt ſuch abilities as Providence has aſſigned them; and while they ſhould not deride excellencies which are above their reach, they ſhould not deſpond at an inferiority which did not depend on themſelves; nor, becauſe God has denied them ten talents, ſhould they forget that they are equally reſponſible for the one he *has* allotted them, but ſet about devoting that one with humble diligence to the glory of the Giver.

Vanity, however, is not the monopoly of talents. Let not a young lady, therefore, fancy that ſhe is humble, merely becauſe ſhe is not ingenious, or conſider the abſence of talents as the criterion of worth. Humility is not the excluſive privilege of dulneſs. Folly is as conceited as wit, and ignorance many a time outſtrips knowledge in the race of vanity. Equally earneſt competitions ſpring from cauſes leſs worthy to excite them than wit and genius. Vanity inſinuates itſelf into the female heart under a variety of unſuſpected forms,

and is on the watch to enter it by ſeizing on many a little paſs which was not thought worth guarding.

Who has not ſeen as reſtleſs emotion agitate the features of an anxious matron, while peace and fame hung trembling in doubtful ſuſpence on the ſucceſs of a ſoup or a ſauce, on which ſentence was about to be pronounced by ſome conſummate critic, as could have been excited by any competition for literary renown, or any ſtruggle for conteſted wit? Anxiety for fame is by no means meaſured by the real value of the object purſued, but by the degree of eſtimation in which it is held by the purſuer. Nor was the illuſtrious hero of Greece more effectually hindered from ſleeping by the trophies of Miltiades, than many a modiſh damſel by the eclipſing ſuperiority of ſome newer decoration exhibited by her more ſucceſsful friend.

There is another ſpecies of vanity in ſome women which diſguiſes itſelf under the thin veil of an affected humility; they will ac-

 cuſe

cuſe themſelves of ſome fault from which they are remarkably exempt, and lament the want of ſome talent which they are rather notorious for poſſeſſing. Now though the wiſeſt are commonly the moſt humble, and thoſe who are freeſt from faults are moſt forward in confeſſing error; yet the practice we are cenſuring is not only a clumſy trap for praiſe, but there is a diſingenuous intention, by renouncing a quality they eminently poſſeſs, to gain credit for others in which they are really deficient. All affectation involves a ſpecies of deceit. The Apoſtle when he enjoins, "not to think "of ourſelves more highly than we ought," does not exhort us to think *falſely* of ourſelves, but to think "ſoberly;" and it is worth obſerving that in this injunction he does not uſe the word *ſpeak*, but *think*, inferring poſſibly, that it would be ſafer to *ſpeak* little of ourſelves or not at all; for it is ſo far from being an unequivocal proof of our humility to talk even of our defects, that while we make *ſelf* the ſubject, in

whatever way, ſelf-love contrives to be gratified, and will even be content that our faults ſhould be talked of, rather than that we ſhould not be talked of at all. Some are alſo attacked with ſuch proud fits of humility, that while they are ready to accuſe themſelves of almoſt every ſin in the lump, they yet take fire at the imputation of the ſlighteſt *individual* fault; and inſtantly enter upon their own vindication as warmly as if you, and not themſelves, had brought forward the charge. The truth is, they ventured to condemn themſelves, in the full confidence that you would contradict their ſelf-accuſation; the laſt thing they intended was that you ſhould believe them, and they are never ſo much piqued and diſappointed as when they are taken at their word.

Of the various ſhapes and undefined forms into which vanity branches out in converſation, there is no end. Out of a reſtleſs deſire to pleaſe, grows the vain deſire

to aſtoniſh: for from vanity, as much as from credulity, ariſes that ſtrong love of the marvellous, with which the converſation of the ill-educated abounds. Hence that fondneſs for dealing in narratives hardly within the compaſs of poſſibility. Here vanity has many ſhades of gratification; thoſe ſhades will be ſtronger or weaker, whether the relater chance to have been an eye-witneſs of the wonder ſhe recounts; or whether ſhe claim only the ſecond-hand renown of its having happened to her friend, or the ſtill remoter celebrity of its having been witneſſed only by her friend's friend: but even though that friend only knew the man, who remembered the woman, who converſed with the perſon, who actually beheld the thing which is now cauſing admiration in the company, ſtill *ſelf*, though in a fainter degree, is brought into notice, and the relater contrives in ſome circuitous and diſtant way to be connected with the wonder.

To

To correct this propensity "to elevate "and surprise*," it would be well in mixed society to abstain altogether from hazarding stories, which though they may not be absolutely false, yet lying without the verge of probability, are apt to impeach the credit of the narrator; in whom the very consciousness that she is not believed, excites an increased eagerness to depart still farther from the soberness of truth, and induces a habit of vehement asseveration, which is too often called in to help out a questionable point †. Or if the propensity be irresistible, I would recommend to those persons who are much addicted to relate doubtful, or improbable, or

* The Rehearsal.

† This is also a good rule in composition. An event, though it may actually have happened, yet if it be out of the reach of probability, or contrary to the common course of nature, will seldom be chosen as a subject by a writer of good taste; for he knows that a probable fiction will interest the feelings more than an unlikely truth. Verisimilitude is indeed the poet's truth, but the truth of the moralist is of a more sturdy growth.

wonderful circumftances, to imitate the example of the two great naturalifts, Ariftotle and Boyle, who not being willing to difcredit their works with incredible relations, threw all their improbabilities into a lump, under the general name of *Strange Reports*. May we not fufpect that, in fome inftances, the chapter of ftrange reports would be a bulky one?

There is another fhape, and a very deformed fhape it is, in which loquacious vanity fhews itfelf: I mean the betraying of confidence. Though the act be treacherous, yet the fault, in the firft inftance, is not treachery, but vanity. It does not fo often fpring from the mifchievous defire of divulging a fecret, as from the pride of having been trufted with it. It is the fecret inclination of mixing *felf* with whatever is important. The fecret would be of little value, if the revealing it did not ferve to intimate *our* connexion with it; the pleafure of its having been depofited with us would be nothing, if others may not know

that

that it has been ſo depoſited.—When we continue to ſee the variety of ſerious evils which this principle involves, ſhall we perſiſt in aſſerting that vanity is a ſlender miſchief?

There is one offence committed in converſation of much too ſerious a nature to be overlooked, or to be animadverted on without ſorrow and indignation: I mean, the habitual and thoughtleſs profaneneſs of thoſe who are repeatedly invoking their Maker's name on occaſions the moſt trivial. It is offenſive in all its variety of aſpects;—it is very pernicious in its *effects*;—it is a *growing* evil;—thoſe who are moſt guilty of it, are from habit hardly conſcious when they do it; are not aware of the ſin; and for both theſe reaſons, without the admonitions of faithful friendſhip, are little likely to diſcontinue it.—It is utterly INEXCUSABLE;—it has none of the palliatives of *temptation* which other vices plead, and in that reſpect ſtands diſtinguiſhed from all others both in its nature and degree of guilt.—Like many

 other

other ſins, however, it is at once cauſe and effect; it *proceeds* from want of love and reverence to the beſt of Beings, and *cauſes* the want of that love both in themſelves and others. Yet with all thoſe aggravations, there is, perhaps, hardly any ſin ſo frequently committed, ſo ſlightly cenſured, ſo ſeldom repented of, and ſo little guarded againſt. On the ſcore of *impropriety* too, it is additionally offenſive, as being utterly repugnant to female delicacy, which often does not ſee the turpitude of this ſin, while it affects to be ſhocked at ſwearing in a man. Now this ſpecies of profaneneſs is not only ſwearing, but, perhaps, in ſome reſpects, ſwearing of the worſt ſort; as it is a *direct* breach of an expreſs command, and offends againſt the *very letter* of that law which ſays in ſo many words, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. It offends againſt politeneſs and *good breeding;* for thoſe who commit it, little think of the pain they are inflicting on the ſober mind, which

which is deeply wounded when it hears the holy name it loves diſhonoured; and it is as contrary to good breeding to give pain, as it is to true piety to be profane. It is aſtoniſhing that the refined and elegant ſhould not reprobate this practice for its coarſeneſs and vulgarity, as much as the pious abhor it for its ſinfulneſs.

I would endeavour to give ſome faint idea of the groſſneſs of this offence, by an analogy, (oh! how inadequate!) with which the feeling heart, even though not ſeaſoned with religion, may yet be touched. To ſuch I would earneſtly ſay:—Suppoſe you had ſome beloved friend,—to put the caſe ſtill more ſtrongly, a departed friend —a revered parent, perhaps,—whoſe image never occurs without awaking in your boſom ſentiments of tender love and lively gratitude; how would you feel if you heard this honoured name *bandied about* with unfeeling familiarity and indecent levity; or at beſt, thruſt into every pauſe of ſpeech as a vulgar expletive? Does not your affectionate heart recoil at the thought?

thought? And yet the hallowed name of your trueſt Benefactor, your heavenly Father, your beſt Friend, to whom you are indebted for all you enjoy; who gives you thoſe very friends in whom you ſo much delight, thoſe very talents with which you diſhonour him, thoſe very organs of ſpeech with which you blaſpheme him, is treated with an irreverence, a contempt, a wantonneſs, with which you cannot bear the very thought or mention of treating a human friend. His name is impiouſly, is unfeelingly, is ungratefully ſingled out as the object of decided irreverence, of ſyſtematic contempt, of thoughtleſs levity. His ſacred name is uſed indiſcriminately to expreſs anger, joy, grief, ſurprize, impatience; and what is almoſt ſtill more unpardonable than all, it is wantonly uſed as a mere unmeaning expletive, which, being excited by no temptation, can have nothing to extenuate it; which, cauſing no emotion, can have nothing to recommend it, unleſs it be the pleaſure of the ſin.

Among

Among the deep, but lefs obvious mif-chiefs of converfation, *mifreprefentation* muft not be overlooked. Self-love is continually at work, to give to all we fay a bias in our own favour. The counter-action of this fault fhould be fet about in the earlieft ftages of education. If young perfons have not been difcouraged in the natural, but evil, propenfity to relate every difpute they have had with others to their own advantage; if they have not been trained to the bounden duty of doing juftice even to thofe with whom they are at variance; if they have not been led to aim at a complete impartiality in their little narratives, and inftructed never to take advantage of the abfence of the other party, in order to make the ftory lean to their own fide more than the truth will admit; how fhall we in advanced life look for correct habits, for unprejudiced reprefentations, for fidelity, accuracy, and unbiaffed juftice?

Yet,

Yet, how often in ſociety, otherwiſe reſpectable, are we pained with narrations in which prejudice warps, and ſelf-love blinds! How often do we ſee, that withholding part of a truth anſwers the worſt ends of a falſehood! How often regret the unfair turn given to a cauſe, by placing a ſentiment in one point of view, which the ſpeaker had uſed in another! the letter of truth preſerved where its ſpirit is violated! a ſuperſtitious exactneſs ſcrupulouſly maintained in the underparts of a detail, in order to impreſs ſuch an idea of integrity as ſhall gain credit for the *miſrepreſenter*, while he is deſignedly miſtating the leading principle. How may we obſerve a new character given to a fact by a different look, tone, or emphaſis, which alters it as much as words could have done! the falſe impreſſion of a ſermon conveyed, when we do not like the preacher, or when through him we wiſh to make religion itſelf ridiculous! the care to avoid literal untruths, while

while the miſchief is better effected by the unfair quotation of a paſſage diveſted of its context; the bringing together detached portions of a ſubject, and making thoſe parts ludicrous, when connected, which were ſerious in their diſtinct poſition! the inſidious uſe made of a ſentiment by repreſenting it as the *opinion* of him who had only brought it forward in order to expoſe it! the relating opinions which had merely been put hypothetically, as if they were the avowed principles of him we would diſcredit! that ſubtle falſehood which is ſo made to incorporate with a certain quantity of truth, that the moſt ſkilful moral chemiſt cannot analyſe or ſeparate them! for a good *miſrepreſenter* knows that a ſucceſsful lie muſt have a certain infuſion of truth, or it will not go down. And this amalgamation is the teſt of his ſkill; as too *much* truth would defeat the end of his miſchief; and too *little* would deſtroy the belief of the hearer. All that indefinable ambiguity and equivoca-

 tion;

tion; all that prudent deceit, which is rather implied than expreſſed; thoſe more delicate artifices of the ſchool of Loyola and of Cheſterfield, which allow us when we dare not deny a truth, yet ſo to diſguiſe and diſcolour it, that the truth we relate ſhall not reſemble the truth we heard! Theſe and all the thouſand ſhades of ſimulation and diſſimulation will be carefully guarded againſt in the converſation of vigilant Chriſtians.

Again, it is ſurpriſing to mark the common deviations from ſtrict veracity which ſpring, not from enmity to truth, not from intentional deceit, not from malevolence or envy, not from the leaſt deſign to injure; but from mere levity, habitual inattention, and a current notion that it is not worth while to be correct in ſmall things. But here the doctrine of habits comes in with great force, and in that view no error is ſmall. The cure of this diſeaſe in its more inveterate ſtages being next to impoſſible,

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its prevention ought to be one of the earliest objects of education*.

Some women indulge themselves in sharp raillery, unfeeling wit, and cutting sarcasms, from the consciousness, it is to be feared, that they are secure from the danger of being called to account; this license of speech being encouraged by the very circumstance which ought to suppress it. To be severe, because they can be so with impunity, is a most ungenerous reason. It is taking a base and dishonourable advantage of their sex, the weakness of which, instead of tempting them to commit offences because they can commit them with safety, ought rather to make them more scrupulously careful to avoid indiscretions for which no reparation can be demanded. What can be said for those who carelessly involve the injured party in consequences from which they

* See the Chapter on the Use of Definitions.

know

know themſelves are exempted, and whoſe very ſenſe of their own ſecurity leads them to be indifferent to the ſecurity of others?

The grievous fault of groſs and obvious detraction which infects converſation, has been ſo heavily and ſo juſtly condemned by divines and moraliſts, that the ſubject, copious as it is, is exhauſted. But there is an error of an oppoſite complexion, which we have before noticed, and againſt which the peculiar temper of the times requires that young ladies of a better caſt ſhould be guarded. From the narrowneſs of their own ſphere of obſervation, they are ſometimes addicted to accuſe of uncharitableneſs, that diſtinguiſhing judgment which, reſulting from a ſound penetration and a zeal for truth, forbids perſons of a very correct principle to be indiſcriminately prodigal of commendation without inquiry, and without diſtinction. There is an affectation of candour, which is almoſt as miſchievous as calumny itſelf; nay, if it

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be leſs injurious in its individual applica-tion, it is, perhaps, more alarming in its general principle, as it lays waſte the ſtrong fences which ſeparate good from evil. They know, as a general principle, (though they ſometimes calumniate,) that calumny is wrong; but they have not been told that flattery is wrong alſo; and youth, being apt to fancy that the direct contrary to wrong muſt neceſſarily be right, are apt to be driven into violent extremes. The dread of being only ſuſpected of one fault, makes them actually guilty of the oppoſite; and to avoid the charge of harſhneſs or of envy, they plunge into in-ſincerity and falſehood. In this they are actuated either by an unſound judgment which does not ſee what is right, or an unſound principle which prefers what is wrong.—Some alſo commend to conceal envy; and others are compaſſionate to in-dulge ſuperiority.

In this age of high-minded independence, when our youth are apt to ſet up for them-

ſelves, and every man is too much diſpoſed to be his own legiſlator without looking to the eſtabliſhed law of the land as his ſtandard; and to ſet up for his own divine, without looking to the revealed will of God as his rule—by a candour equally vicious with our vanity, we are alſo complaiſantly led to *give* the latitude we *take:* and it is become too frequent a practice in our *tolerating* young ladies, when ſpeaking of their more erring and miſled acquaintance, to offer for them this flimſy vindication, "that what they do is right if it appear "right to *them:*"—"if *they* ſee the "thing in that light, and act up to it "with ſincerity, they cannot be materi-"ally wrong." But the ſtandard of truth, juſtice, and religion, muſt neither be elevated nor depreſſed, in order to accommodate it to actual circumſtances; it muſt never be lowered to palliate error, to juſtify folly, or to vindicate vice. Good-natured young people often ſpeak favourably of unworthy, or extravagantly of com-

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mon characters, from one of these motives; either their own views of excellence are low, or they speak respectfully of the undeserving, to purchase for themselves the reputation of tenderness and generosity; or they lavish unsparing praise on almost all alike, in the usurious hope of buying back universal commendation in return; or in those captivating characters in which the simple and masculine language of truth is sacrificed to the jargon of affected softness; and in which smooth and pliant manners are substituted for intrinsic worth, the inexperienced are too apt to *suppose* virtues, and to *forgive* vices. But they should carefully guard against the error of making *manner* the criterion of merit, and of giving unlimited credit to strangers for possessing every perfection, only because they bring into company the engaging exterior of urbanity and alluring gentleness. They should also remember that it is an easy, but not an honest way of obtaining the praise of candour, to get

into the ſoft and popular habit of ſaying of all their acquaintance, when ſpeaking of them, that *they are ſo good!* True Chriſtian candour conceals faults, but it does not invent virtues. It tenderly forbears to expoſe the evil which may belong to a character, but it dares not aſcribe to it the good which does not exiſt. To correct this propenſity to falſe judgment and inſincerity, it would be well to bear in mind, that while every good action, come from what ſource it may, and every good quality, be it found in whomſoever it will, deſerves its fair proportion of diſtinct and willing commendation; yet no character is GOOD, in the true ſenſe of the word, which is not RELIGIOUS.

In fine—to recapitulate what has been ſaid, with ſome additional hints:—Study to promote both intellectual and moral improvement in converſation; labour to bring into it a diſpoſition to bear with others, and to be watchful over yourſelf; keep out of ſight any prominent talent of your

own,

own, which, if indulged, might difcourage or opprefs the feeble-minded; and try to bring their modeft virtues into notice. If you know any one prefent to poffefs any particular weaknefs or infirmity, never exercife your wit by malicioufly inventing occafions which may lead her to expofe or betray it; but give as favourable a turn as you can to the follies which appear, and kindly help her to keep the reft out of fight. Never gratify your own humour, by hazarding what you fufpect may wound any prefent in their perfons, connections, profeffions in life, or religious opinions; and do not forget to examine whether the laugh your wit has raifed be never bought at this expence. Give credit to thofe who, without your kindnefs, will get none; do not talk *at* any one whom you dare not talk *to*, unlefs from motives in which the golden rule will bear you out. Seek neither to fhine nor to triumph; and if you feek to pleafe, take care that it be in order to convert the influence you may

gain by pleaſing, to the good of others. Cultivate true politeneſs, for it grows out of true principle, and is conſiſtent with the Goſpel of Chriſt; but avoid thoſe feigned attentions which are not ſtimulated by good-will, and thoſe ſtated profeſſions of fondneſs which are not dictated by eſteem. Remember that the pleaſure of being thought *amiable* by ſtrangers, may be too dearly purchaſed, if it be purchaſed at the expence of truth and ſimplicity: remember, that Simplicity is the firſt charm in manner, as Truth is in mind; and could Truth make herſelf viſible, ſhe would appear inveſted in Simplicity.

Remember alſo, that true Chriſtian good nature is the ſoul, of which politeneſs is only the garb. It is not that artificial quality which is taken up by many when they go into ſociety, in order to charm thoſe whom it is not their particular buſineſs to pleaſe; and is laid down when they return home to thoſe to whom to appear amiable is a real duty. It is not that

fascinating but deceitful softness, which, after having acted over a hundred scenes of the most lively sympathy and tender interest with every slight acquaintance; after having exhausted every phrase of feeling, for the trivial sicknesses or petty sorrows of multitudes who are scarcely known, leaves it doubtful whether a grain of real feeling or genuine sympathy be reserved for the dearest connexions: and which dismisses a woman to her immediate friends with little affection, and to her own family with little attachment.

True good-nature, that which alone deserves the name, is not a holiday ornament, but an every-day habit. It does not consist in servile complaisance, or dishonest flattery, or affected sympathy, or unqualified assent, or unwarrantable compliance, or eternal smiles. Before it can be allowed to rank with the virtues, it must be wrought up from a humour into a principle, from an occasional disposition into a habit. It must be the result of an equal and

and well-governed mind, not the ſtart of caſual gaiety, the trick of deſigning vanity, or the whim of capricious fondneſs. It is compounded of kindneſs, forbearance, forgiveneſs, and ſelf-denial; "it ſeeketh not "its own," but is capable of making continual ſacrifices of its own taſtes, humours, and ſelf-love; yet knows that among the ſacrifices it makes, it muſt never include its integrity. Politeneſs on the one hand, and Inſenſibility on the other, aſſume its name, and wear its honours; but they aſſume the honours of a triumph, without the merit of a victory; for politeneſs ſubdues nothing, and inſenſibility has nothing to ſubdue. Good-nature of the true caſt, and under the foregoing regulations, is above all price in the common intercourſe of domeſtic ſociety; for an ordinary quality, which is conſtantly brought into action by the perpetually recurring though minute events of daily life, is of higher value than more brilliant qualities which are leſs frequently called into uſe: as ſmall

pieces

pieces of ordinary current coin are of more importance in the commerce of the world than the medals of the antiquary. And, indeed, Chriſtianity has given that new turn to the character of all the virtues, that perhaps it is the beſt teſt of the excellence of many that they have little brilliancy in them. The Chriſtian Religion has degraded ſome ſplendid qualities from the rank they held, and elevated thoſe which were obſcure into diſtinction.

CHAP. XVI.

On the Danger of an ill-directed Senſibility.

IN conſidering the human mind with a view to its improvement, it is prudent to endeavour to diſcover the natural bent of the individual character; and having found it, to direct your force againſt that ſide on which the warp lies, that you may leſſen by counteraction the defect which you might be promoting, by applying your aid in a contrary direction. But the misfortune is, people who mean better than they judge are apt to take up a ſet of general rules, good perhaps in themſelves, and originally gleaned from experience and obſervation on the nature of human things, but not applicable in all caſes. Theſe rules they keep by them as noſtrums of univerſal efficacy, which they therefore often bring out

out for uſe in caſes to which they do not apply. For to make any remedy effectual, it is not enough to know the medicine, you muſt ſtudy the conſtitution alſo; if there be not a congruity between the two, you may be injuring one patient by the means which are requiſite to raiſe and reſtore another.

In forming the female character it is of importance that thoſe on whom the taſk devolves ſhould poſſeſs ſo much penetration as accurately to diſcern the degree of ſenſibility, and ſo much judgment as to accommodate the treatment to the individual character. By conſtantly ſtimulating and extolling feelings naturally quick, thoſe feelings will be rendered too acute and irritable. On the other hand, a calm and equable temper will become obtuſe by the total want of excitement: the former treatment converts the feelings into a ſource of error, agitation, and calamity; the latter ſtarves their native energy, deadens the affections, and produces a cold, dull, ſelfiſh ſpirit; for the human mind is an inſtrument

ſtrument which will loſe its ſweetneſs if ſtrained too high, and will be deprived of its tone and ſtrength if not ſufficiently raiſed.

It is cruel to chill the precious ſenſibility of an ingenuous ſoul, by treating with ſupercilious coldneſs and unfeeling ridicule every indication of a warm, tender, diſintereſted, and enthuſiaſtic ſpirit, as if it exhibited ſymptoms of a deficiency in underſtanding or in prudence. How many are apt to intimate, with a ſmile of mingled pity and contempt, in conſidering ſuch a character, that when ſhe knows the world, that is, in other words, when ſhe ſhall be grown cunning, ſelfiſh, and ſuſpicious, ſhe will be aſhamed of her preſent glow of honeſt warmth, and of her lovely ſuſceptibility of heart. May ſhe never know the world, if the knowledge of it muſt be acquired at ſuch an expence! But to ſenſible hearts, every indication of genuine feeling will be dear, for they well know that it is this temper which, by the guidance of

of the Divine Spirit, may make her one day become more enamoured of the beauty of holineſs; which, with the co-operation of principle, and under its direction will render her the lively agent of Providence in diminiſhing the miſery that is in the world; into which miſery this temper will give her a quicker intuition than colder characters poſſeſs. It is this temper which, when it is touched and purified by a "live coal "from the altar *," will give her a keener taſte for the ſpirit of religion, and a quicker zeal in diſcharging its duties. But let it be remembered likewiſe, that as there is no quality in the female character which more raiſes its tone, ſo there is none which will be ſo likely to endanger the peace, and to expoſe the virtue of the poſſeſſor; none which requires to have its luxuriances more carefully watched, and its wild ſhoots more cloſely lopped.

For young women of affections naturally warm, but not carefully diſciplined, are in

* Iſaiah, vi. 6.

danger

danger of incurring an unnatural irritability; and while their happineſs falls a victim to the exceſs of uncontrolled feelings, they are liable at the ſame time to indulge a vanity of all others the moſt preposterous, that of being vain of their very defect. They have heard ſenſibility highly commended, without having heard any thing of thoſe bounds and fences which were intended to confine it, and without having been imbued with that principle which would have given it a beneficial direction. Conſcious that they poſſeſs the quality itſelf in the extreme, and not aware that they want all that makes that quality ſafe and delightful, they plunge headlong into thoſe ſins and miſeries from which they conceitedly and ignorantly imagine, that not principle, but coldneſs, has preſerved the more ſober-minded and well-inſtructed of their ſex.

As it would be foreign to the preſent deſign to expatiate on thoſe criminal exceſſes which are ſome of the ſad effects

of

of ungoverned paſſion, it is only intended here to hazard a few remarks on thoſe lighter conſequences of it which conſiſt in the loſs of comfort without ruin of character, and occaſion the privation of much of the happineſs of life without involving any very cenſurable degree of guilt or diſcredit. It may, however, be incidentally remarked, and let it be carefully remembered, that if no women have riſen ſo high in the ſcale of moral excellence as thoſe whoſe natural warmth has been conſcientiouſly governed by its true guide, and directed to its true end; ſo none have furniſhed ſuch deplorable inſtances of extreme depravity as thoſe who, through the ignorance or the dereliction of principle, have been abandoned by the exceſs of this very temper to the violence of ungoverned paſſions and uncontrolled inclinations. Perhaps, if we were to inquire into the remote cauſe of ſome of the blackeſt crimes which ſtain the annals of mankind, profligacy, murder, and eſpecially ſuicide, we might trace them

back to this original principle, an ungoverned Senſibility.

Notwithſtanding all the fine theories in proſe and verſe to which this topic has given birth, it will be found that very exquiſite ſenſibility contributes ſo little to *happineſs*, and may yet be made to contribute ſo much to *uſefulneſs*, that it may, perhaps, be generally conſidered as beſtowed for an exerciſe to the poſſeſſor's own virtue, and at the ſame time, as a keen inſtrument with which he may better work for the good of others.

Women of this caſt of mind are leſs careful to avoid the charge of unbounded extremes, than to eſcape at all events the imputation of inſenſibility. They are little alarmed at the danger of *exceeding*, though terrified at the ſuſpicion of *coming ſhort*, of what they take to be the extreme point of feeling. They will even reſolve to prove the warmth of their ſenſibility, though at the expence of their judgment, and ſometimes alſo of their juſtice. Even when

they earneſtly deſire to *be* and to *do* good, they are apt to employ the wrong inſtrument to accompliſh the right end. They employ the paſſions to do the work of the judgment; forgetting, or not knowing, that the paſſions were not given us to be uſed in the ſearch and diſcovery of truth, which is the office of a cooler and more diſcriminating faculty; but to animate us to warmer zeal in the purſuit and practice of truth, when the judgment ſhall have pointed out what *is* truth.

Through this natural warmth, which they have been juſtly told is ſo pleaſing, but which perhaps, they have not been told will be continually expoſing them to peril and to ſuffering, their joys and ſorrows are exceſſive. Of this extreme irritability, as was before remarked, the ill-educated learn to boaſt as if it were a decided indication of ſuperiority of ſoul, inſtead of labouring to reſtrain it as the exceſs of a temper which ceaſes to be amiable, when it is no longer under the control of

 the

the governing faculty. It is misfortune enough to be born more liable to ſuffer and to ſin, from this conformation of mind; it is too much to nouriſh the evil by unreſtrained indulgence; it is ſtill worſe to be proud of ſo miſleading a quality.

Flippancy, impetuoſity, reſentment, and violence of ſpirit, grow out of this diſpoſition, which will be rather promoted than corrected, by the ſyſtem of education on which we have been animadverting; in which ſyſtem, emotions are too early and too much excited, and taſtes and feelings are conſidered as too excluſively making up the whole of the female character; in which the judgment is little exerciſed, the reaſoning powers are ſeldom brought into action, and ſelf-knowledge and ſelf-denial ſcarcely included.

The propenſity of mind which we are conſidering, if unchecked, lays its poſſeſſors open to unjuſt prepoſſeſſions, and expoſes them to all the danger of unfounded attachments. In early youth, not only

love

love at firſt ſight, but alſo friendſhip, of the ſame inſtantaneous growth, ſprings up from an ill-directed ſenſibility; and in after-life, women under the powerful influence of this temper, conſcious that they have much to be borne with, are too readily inclined to ſelect for their confidential connections, flexible and flattering companions, who will indulge and perhaps admire their faults, rather than firm and honeſt friends, who will reprove and would aſſiſt in curing them. We may adopt it as a general maxim, that an obliging, weak, yielding, complaiſant friend, full of ſmall attentions, with little religion, little judgment, and much natural acquieſcence and civility, is a moſt dangerous, though generally a too much deſired confidante: ſhe ſoothes the indolence, and gratifies the vanity of her friend, by reconciling her to her faults, while ſhe neither keeps the underſtanding nor the virtues of that friend in exerciſe; but withholds from her every

uſeful truth, which by opening her eyes might give her pain. Theſe obſequious qualities are the "ſoft green *" on which the ſoul loves to repoſe itſelf. But it is not a refreſhing or a wholeſome repoſe: we ſhould not ſelect, for the ſake of preſent eaſe, a ſoothing flatterer, who will lull us into a pleaſing oblivion of our failings, but a friend who, valuing our ſoul's health above our immediate comfort, will rouſe us from torpid indulgence to animation, vigilance, and virtue.

An ill-directed ſenſibility alſo leads a woman to be injudicious and eccentric in her *charities*; ſhe will be in danger of proportioning her bounty to the immediate effect which the diſtreſſed object produces on her ſenſes: and will therefore be more liberal to a ſmall diſtreſs preſenting itſelf to her own eyes, than to the more preſſing wants and better claims of thoſe miſeries of which ſhe only hears the relation.

* Burke's "Sublime and Beautiful."

There

There is a ſort of ſtage-effect which ſome people require for their charities; and ſuch a character as we are conſidering, will be apt alſo to deſire, that the object of her compaſſion ſhall have ſomething intereſting and amiable in it, ſuch as ſhall furniſh pleaſing images and lively pictures to her imagination, and engaging ſubjects for deſcription; forgetting, that in her charities, as well as in every thing elſe, ſhe is to be a "follower of Him who pleaſed not him-"ſelf:" forgetting, that the moſt coarſe and diſguſting object may be as much the repreſentative of Him, who ſaid, "Inaſ-"much as ye do it to one of the leaſt of "theſe ye do it unto me," as the moſt intereſting. Nay, the more uninviting and repulſive caſes may be better teſts of the principle on which we relieve, than thoſe which abound in pathos and intereſt, as we can have leſs ſuſpicion of our motive in the latter caſe than in the former. But, while we ought to neglect neither of theſe ſuppoſed caſes, yet the leſs our feelings are

caught by pleafing circumftances, the lefs will be the danger of our indulging felf-complacency, and the more likely fhall we be to do what we do for the fake of Him who has taught us, that no deeds but what are performed on that principle "fhall be recompenfed at the refurrection "of the juft."

But through the want of that governing principle which fhould direct her fenfibility, a tender-hearted woman, whofe hand, if fhe be actually furrounded with fcenes and circumftances to call it into action, is

Open as day to melting charity;

neverthelefs may utterly fail in the great and comprehenfive duty of Chriftian love, for fhe has feelings which are acted upon folely by local circumftances and prefent events. Only remove her into another fcene, diftant from the wants fhe has been relieving; place her in the lap of indulgence, fo entrenched with eafe and plea-

fure,

ſure, ſo immerſed in the ſoftneſs of life, that diſtreſs no longer finds any acceſs to her preſence, but through the faint and dull medium of a diſtant repreſentation: remove her from the ſight and ſound of that miſery, which, when preſent, ſo tenderly affected her—ſhe now forgets that miſery exiſts; as ſhe hears but little, and ſees nothing of want and ſorrow, ſhe is ready to fancy that the world is grown happier than it was: in the meantime, with a quiet conſcience and a thoughtleſs vanity, ſhe has been laviſhing on ſuperfluities that money which ſhe would cheerfully have given to a charitable caſe, had ſhe not forgotten that any ſuch were in exiſtence, becauſe *Pleaſure* had blocked up the avenues through which miſery uſed to find its way to her heart; and now, when again ſuch a caſe forces itſelf into her preſence, ſhe laments with real ſincerity that the money is gone which ſhould have relieved it.

In the meantime, perhaps, other women of leſs natural ſympathy, but whoſe ſympathies are under better regulation, or who act from a principle which requires little ſtimulus, have, by an habitual courſe of ſelf-denial, by a conſtant determination to refuſe themſelves unneceſſary indulgencies, and by guarding againſt that diſſolving PLEASURE which melts down the firmeſt virtue that allows itſelf to baſk in its beams, have been quietly furniſhing a regular proviſion for miſeries, which their knowledge of the ſtate of the world teaches them are everywhere to be found, and which their obedience to the will of God tells them it is their duty both to find out and to relieve; a general expectation of being liable to be called upon for acts of charity, will lead the conſcientiouſly charitable always to be prepared.

On ſuch a mind as we have been deſcribing, *Novelty* alſo will operate with peculiar

peculiar force, and in nothing more than in the article of charity. Old eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, whoſe continued exiſtence muſt depend on the continued bounty of that affluence to which they owed their origin, will be ſometimes neglected, as preſenting no variety to the imagination, as having by their uniformity ceaſed to be intereſting; there is now a total failure of thoſe ſprings of mere ſenſitive feeling which ſet the charity a-going, and thoſe ſudden emotions of tenderneſs and guſts of pity, which once were felt, muſt now be excited by newer forms of diſtreſs.— As age comes on, that charity which has been the effect of mere feeling, grows cold and rigid; this hardneſs is alſo increaſed by the frequent diſappointments charity has experienced in its too high expectations of the gratitude and ſubſequent merit of thoſe it has relieved; and by withdrawing its bounty, becauſe ſome of its objects have been undeſerving, it gives clear proof that what it beſtowed

was for its own gratification; and now finding that self-complacency at an end, it bestows no longer. Probably too the cause of so much disappointment may have been, that ill choice of the objects to which feeling, rather than a discriminating judgment, has led. The summer showers of mere sensibility soon dry up, while the living spring of Christian charity flows alike in all seasons.

The impatience, levity, and fickleness, of which women have been somewhat too generally accused, are perhaps in no small degree aggravated by the littleness and frivolousness of female pursuits. The sort of education they commonly receive, teaches girls to set a great price on small things. Besides this, they do not always learn to keep a very correct scale of degrees for rating the value of the objects of their admiration and attachment; but by a kind of unconscious idolatry, they rather make a merit of loving *supremely* things and persons which ought to be loved with

 moderation

moderation and in a ſubordinate degree the one to the other. Unfortunately, they conſider moderation as ſo neceſſarily indicating a cold heart and narrow ſoul, and they look upon a ſtate of indifference with ſo much horror, that either to love or hate with energy is ſuppoſed by them to proceed from a higher ſtate of mind than is poſſeſſed by more ſteady and equable characters. Whereas it is in fact the criterion of a warm but well-directed ſenſibility, that while it is capable of loving with energy, it muſt be enabled, by the judgment which governs it, to ſuit and adjuſt its degree of intereſt to the nature and excellence of the object about which it is intereſted; for unreaſonable prepoſſeſſion, diſproportionate attachment, and capricious or precarious fondneſs, is not ſenſibility.

Exceſſive but unintentional *flattery* is another fault into which a ſtrong ſenſibility is in danger of leading its poſſeſſor. A tender heart and a warm imagination

conſpire

conſpire to throw a ſort of radiance round the object of their love, till they are dazzled by a brightneſs of their own creating. The worldly and faſhionable borrow the warm language of ſenſibility without having the really warm feeling; and young ladies get ſuch a habit of ſaying, and eſpecially of writing, ſuch over obliging and flattering things to each other, that this mutual politeneſs, aided by the ſelf-love ſo natural to us all, and by an unwillingneſs to ſearch into our own hearts, keeps up the illuſion, and we acquire a habit of taking our character from the good we *hear* of ourſelves, which others aſſume, but do not very well know, rather than from the evil we *feel* in ourſelves, and which we therefore ought to be too thoroughly acquainted with to take our opinion of ourſelves from what we hear from others.

Ungoverned ſenſibility is apt to give a wrong direction to its anxieties; and its affection often falls ſhort of the true end of friendſhip.

friendſhip. If the object of its regard happen to be ſick, what inquiries! what preſcriptions! what an accumulation is made of caſes in which the remedy its fondneſs ſuggeſts has been ſucceſsful! What an unaffected tenderneſs for the periſhing body! Yet is this ſenſibility equally alive to the immortal intereſts of the ſufferer? Is it not ſilent and at eaſe when it contemplates the deareſt friend perſiſting in opinions eſſentially dangerous; in practices unqueſtionably wrong? Does it not view all this, not only without a generous ardour to point out the peril, and reſcue the friend; but if that friend be ſuppoſed to be dying, does it not even make it the *criterion* of kindneſs to let her die undeceived as to her true ſtate? What a want of real ſenſibility, to feel for the pain, but not for the danger of thoſe we love? Now ſee what ſort of ſenſibility the Bible teaches! "Thou ſhalt not hate thy bro-"ther in thine heart, but thou ſhalt in "any wiſe rebuke him, and ſhalt not ſuffer

"ſin

"ſin upon him *." But let that tenderneſs which ſhrinks from the idea of expoſing what it loves to a momentary pang, figure to itſelf the bare poſſibility, that the object of its own fond affection may not be the object of the Divine favour! Let it ſhrink from the bare conjecture, that "the familiar friend with whom it has "taken ſweet counſel," is going down to the gates of death, unrepenting, unprepared, and yet unwarned!

But mere human ſenſibility goes a ſhorter way to work. Not being able to give its friend the pain of hearing her faults or of knowing her danger, it works itſelf up into the quieting deluſion that no danger exiſts, at leaſt not for the objects of its own affection; it gratifies itſelf by inventing a ſalvation ſo comprehenſive as ſhall take in all itſelf loves with all their faults; it creates to its own fond heart an ideal and exaggerated divine mercy, which ſhall

* Leviticus, xix. 17.

pardon

pardon and receive all in whom this blind ſenſibility has an intereſt, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

In regard to its application to religious purpoſes, it is a teſt that ſenſibility has received its true direction when it is ſupremely turned to the love of God: for to poſſeſs an overflowing fondneſs for our fellow-creatures and fellow-ſinners, and to be cold and inſenſible to the Eſſence of goodneſs and perfection, is an inconſiſtency to which the feeling heart is awfully liable. God has himſelf the firſt claim to the ſenſibility he beſtowed. "He "*firſt* loved us:" this is a *natural* cauſe of love. "He loved us while we were "ſinners:" this is a *ſupernatural* cauſe. He continues to love us though we neglect his favours, and ſlight his mercies: this would wear out any earthly kindneſs. He forgives us, not petty neglects, not occaſional ſlights, but grievous ſins, repeated offences, broken vows, and unrequited love. What human friendſhip

performs offices so calculated to touch the soul of sensibility?

Those young women in whom feeling is indulged to the exclusion of reason and examination, are peculiarly liable to be the dupes of prejudice, rash decisions, and false judgment. The understanding having but little power over the will, their affections are not well poized, and their minds are kept in a state ready to be acted upon by the fluctuations of alternate impulses; by sudden and varying impressions; by casual and contradictory circumstances; and by emotions excited by every accident. Instead of being guided by the broad views of general truth, instead of having one fixed principle, they are driven on by the impetuosity of the moment. And this impetuosity blinds the judgment as much as it misleads the conduct; so that for want of a habit of cool investigation and inquiry, they meet every event without any previously formed opinion or settled rule of action. And as they do not accus-

tom

rom themselves to appreciate the real value of things, their attention is as likely to be led away by the under parts of a subject, as to seize on the leading feature. The same eagerness of mind which hinders the operation of the discriminating faculty, leads also to the error of determining on the rectitude of an action by its success, and to that of making the event of an undertaking decide on its justice or propriety: it also leads to that superficial and erroneous way of judging which fastens on exceptions, if they make in our own favour, as grounds of reasoning, while they lead us to overlook received and general rules which tend to establish a doctrine contrary to our wishes.

Open-hearted, indiscreet girls, often pick up a few strong notions, which are as false in themselves as they are popular among the class in question: such as "that warm friends must make warm "enemies;"—that "the generous love and "hate with all their hearts;"—that "a

"reformed rake makes the beſt huſband;" —that "there is no medium in marriage, "but that it is a ſtate of exquiſite happi-"neſs or exquiſite miſery;" with many other doctrines of equal currency and equal ſoundneſs! Theſe they conſider as axioms, and adopt as rules of life. From the two firſt of theſe oracular ſayings, girls are in no ſmall danger of becoming unjuſt through the very warmth of their hearts: for they will acquire a habit of making their eſtimate of the good or ill qualities of others merely in proportion to the greater or leſs degree of kindneſs which they themſelves have received from them. Their eſtimation of general character is thus formed on inſulated and partial grounds; on the accidental circumſtance of perſonal predilection or perſonal pique. Kindneſs to themſeves or their friends involves all poſſible excellence; neglect, all imaginable defects. Friendſhip and gratitude can and ſhould go a great way; but as they cannot convert vice into virtue,

ſo they ought never to convert truth into falſehood. And it may be the more neceſſary to be upon our guard in this inſtance, becauſe the very idea of gratitude may miſlead us, by converting injuſtice into the ſemblance of a virtue. Warm expreſſions ſhould therefore be limited to the conveying a ſenſe of our own individual obligations which are real, rather than employed to give an impreſſion of general excellence in the perſon who has obliged us, which may be imaginary. A good man is ſtill good, though it may not have fallen in his way to oblige or ſerve *us*, nay, though he may have neglected, or even unintentionally hurt us: and ſin is ſtill ſin, though committed by the perſon in the world to whom we are the moſt obliged, and whom we beſt love.

There is danger alſo leſt our exceſſive commendation of our friends, merely as ſuch, may be derived from vanity as well as gratitude. While we only appear to be triumphing in the virtues of our friend,

we may be guilty of ſelf-complacency; the perſon ſo excellent is the perſon who diſtinguiſhes *us*, and we are too apt to inſert into the general eulogium the diſtinction we ourſelves have received from him who is himſelf ſo much diſtinguiſhed by others.

With reſpect to that fatal and moſt indelicate, nay groſs maxim, that "a re-"formed rake makes the beſt huſband;" (an aphoriſm to which the principles and the happineſs of ſo many young women have been ſacrificed.) It goes upon the prepoſterous ſuppoſition, not only that effects do not follow cauſes, but that they oppoſe them; on the ſuppoſition, that habitual vice creates rectitude of character, and that ſin produces happineſs: thus flatly contradicting what the moral government of God uniformly exhibits in the courſe of human events, and what Revelation ſo evidently and univerſally teaches.

For it ſhould be obſerved, that the reformation is generally, if not always ſuppoſed

pofed to be brought about by the all-conquering force of female charms. Let but a profligate young man have a point to carry by winning the affections of a vain and thoughtlefs girl; he will begin his attack upon her heart by undermining her religious principles, and artfully removing every impediment which might have obftructed her receiving the addreffes of a man without character. And while he will lead her not to hear without ridicule the mention of that change of heart which Scripture teaches and experience proves that the power of Divine grace can work on a vicious character; while he will teach her to fneer at a change which he would treat with contempt, becaufe he denies the poffibility of fo ftrange and miraculous a converfion; yet he will not fcruple to fwear that the power of her beauty has worked a revolution in his own loofe practices which is equally complete and inftantaneous.

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But ſuppoſing his reformation to be genuine, it would even then by no means involve the truth of her propoſition, that paſt libertiniſm inſures future felicity; yet many a weak girl, confirmed in this palatable doctrine by examples ſhe has frequently admired of thoſe ſurpriſing reformations ſo conveniently effected in the laſt ſcene of moſt of our comedies, has not ſcrupled to riſk her earthly and eternal happineſs with a man, who is not aſhamed to aſcribe to the influence of her beauty that power of changing the heart which he impiouſly denies to Omnipotence itſelf.

As to the laſt of theſe practical aphoriſms, that, "there is no medium in "marriage, but that it is a ſtate of ex-"quiſite happineſs or exquiſite miſery;" this, though not equally ſinful, is equally deluſive: for marriage is only one modification of human life, and human life is not commonly in itſelf a ſtate of exquiſite

extremes;

extremes; but is for the moſt part that mixed and moderate ſtate, ſo naturally dreaded by thoſe who ſet out with fancying this world a ſtate of rapture, and ſo naturally expected by thoſe who know it to be a ſtate of probation and diſcipline. Marriage, therefore, is only one condition, and often the beſt condition, of that imperfect ſtate of being which, though ſeldom very exquiſite, is often very tolerable; and which may yield much comfort to thoſe who do not look for conſtant tranſport. But unfortunately, thoſe who find themſelves diſappointed of the unceaſing raptures they had anticipated in marriage, diſdaining to ſit down with ſo poor a proviſion as comfort, and ſcorning the acceptance of that moderate lot which Providence commonly beſtows with a view to check deſpondency and to repreſs preſumption; give themſelves up to the other alternative; and, by abandoning their hearts to diſcontent, make to themſelves

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that miſery with which their fervid imaginations had filled the oppoſite ſcale.

The truth is, theſe young ladies are very apt to pick up their opinions, leſs from the divines than the poets; and the poets, though it muſt be confeſſed they are ſome of the beſt embelliſhers of life, are not *quite* the ſafeſt conductors through it. In travelling through a wilderneſs, though we avail ourſelves of the harmony of ſinging-birds to render the grove delightful, yet we never think of following them as guides to conduct us through its labyrinths.

Thoſe women, in whom the natural defects of a warm temper have been ſtrengthened by an education which foſters their faults, are very dexterous in availing themſelves of a hint, when it favours a ruling inclination, ſoothes vanity, indulges indolence, or gratifies their love of power. They have heard ſo often from their favourite ſentimental authors, and their

more

more flattering male friends, "that when "Nature denied them ſtrength, ſhe gave "them faſcinating graces in compenſa-"tion; that their ſtrength conſiſts in their "weakneſs;" and that "they are en-"dowed with arts of perſuaſion which "ſupply the abſence of force, and the "place of reaſon;" that they learn, in time, to pride themſelves on that very weakneſs, and to become vain of their imperfections; till at length they begin to claim for their defects, not only pardon, but admiration. Hence they acquire a habit of cheriſhing a ſpecies of feeling which, if not checked, terminates in exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs; they learn to produce their inability to bear contradiction as a proof of their tenderneſs; and to indulge in that ſort of irritability in all that relates to themſelves, which inevitably leads to the utter excluſion of all intereſt in the ſufferings of others. Inſtead of exerciſing their ſenſibility in the wholeſome duty of relieving diſtreſs and viſiting ſcenes of ſor-

row,

row, that ſenſibility itſelf is pleaded as a reaſon for their not being able to endure ſights of woe, and for ſhunning the diſtreſs it ſhould be exerted in removing. That exquiſite ſenſe of feeling which God implanted in the heart as a ſtimulus to quicken us in relieving the miſeries of others, is thus introverted, and learns to conſider *ſelf* not as the agent, but the object of compaſſion. Tenderneſs is made an excuſe for being hard-hearted; and inſtead of drying the weeping eyes of others, this falſe delicacy reſerves its ſelfiſh and ready tears for the more elegant and leſs expenſive ſorrows of the melting novel or the pathetic tragedy.

When feeling ſtimulates only to ſelf-indulgence; when the more exquiſite affections of ſympathy and pity evaporate in ſentiment, inſtead of flowing out in active charity, and affording aſſiſtance, protection, or conſolation to every ſpecies of diſtreſs within its reach; it is an evidence that the feeling is of a ſpurious kind; and inſtead

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of being nouriſhed as an amiable tenderneſs, it ſhould be ſubdued as a fond and baſe ſelf-love.

That idleneſs, to whoſe cruel inroads many women of fortune are unhappily expoſed, from not having been trained to conſider wholeſome occupation, vigorous exertion, and ſyſtematic employment, as making part of the indiſpenſable duties and pleaſures of life, lays them open to a thouſand evils of this kind, from which the uſeful and the buſy are exempted; and, perhaps, it would not be eaſy to find a more pitiable object than a woman with a great deal of time and a great deal of money on her hands, who, never having been taught the conſcientious uſe of either, ſquanders both at random, or rather moulders both away, without plan, without principle, and without pleaſure: all whoſe projects begin and terminate in ſelf; who conſiders the reſt of the world only as they may be ſubſervient to her gratification; and to whom it never occurred, that both her

her time and money were given for the gratification and good of others.

It is not much to the credit of the other ſex, that they now and then lend themſelves to the indulgence of this ſelfiſh ſpirit in their wives, and cheriſh by a kind of falſe fondneſs thoſe faults which ſhould be combated by good ſenſe and a reaſonable counteraction: ſlothfully preferring a little falſe peace, the purchaſe of precarious quiet, and the popular reputation of good-nature, to the higher duty of forming the mind, fixing the principles, and ſtrengthening the character of her with whom they are connected. Perhaps too, a little vanity in the huſband helps out his good-nature; he ſecretly rewards himſelf for his ſacrifice by the conſciouſneſs of his ſuperiority; he feels a ſelf-complacency in his patient condeſcenſion to her weakneſs, which tacitly flatters his own ſtrength: and he is, as it were, paid for ſtooping, by the increaſed ſenſe of his own tallneſs. Seeing alſo, perhaps, but little of other

women,

women, he is taught to believe that they are all pretty much alike, and that, as a man of ſenſe, he muſt content himſelf with what he takes to be the common lot. Whereas, in truth, by his miſplaced indulgence, he has rather *made* his own lot than *drawn* it; and thus, through an indolent deſpair in the huſband of being able to effect any amendment by oppoſition, and through the want of that ſound affection which labours to improve and exalt the character of its object; it happens, that many a helpleſs, fretful, and daudling wife acquires a more powerful aſcendancy than the moſt diſcreet and amiable woman; and that the moſt abſolute female tyranny is eſtabliſhed by theſe ſickly and capricious humours.

The poets again, who, to do them juſtice, are always ready to lend a helping hand when any miſchief is to be done, have contributed their full ſhare towards confirming theſe feminine follies: they have ſtrengthened by adulatory maxims,

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ſung in ſeducing ſtrains, thoſe faults which their talents and their influence ſhould have been employed in correcting. By fair and youthful females an argument, drawn from ſound experience and real life, is commonly repelled by a ſtanza or a ſonnet; and a couplet is conſidered as nearly of the ſame validity with a text. When ladies are complimented with being

Fine by defect and delicately weak!

is not a ſtandard of feebleneſs held out to them, to which vanity will gladly reſort, and to which ſoftneſs and indolence can eaſily act up, or rather *act down*, if I may be allowed the expreſſion?

When ladies are told by the ſame miſleading, but to them high, authority, that "ſmiles and tears are the irreſiſtible "arms with which Nature has furniſhed "the weak for conquering the ſtrong," will they not eagerly fly to this cheap and ready artillery, inſtead of labouring to furniſh

furnifh themfelves with a reafonable mind, an equable temper, and a meek and quiet fpirit?

Every animal is endowed by Providence with the peculiar powers adapted to its nature and its wants; while none, except the human, by grafting art on natural fagacity, injures or mars the gift. Spoilt women, who fancy there is fomething more *picquant* and alluring in the mutable graces of caprice, than in the monotonous fmoothnefs of an even temper; and who alfo having heard much, as was obferved before, about their "amiable weaknefs," learn to look about them for the beft fuccedaneum to ftrength, the fuppofed abfence of which they fometimes endeavour to fupply by artifice. By this engine the weakeft woman frequently furnifhes the converfe to the famous reply of the French minifter, who, when he was accufed of governing the mind of that feeble Queen Mary de Medicis by forcery, replied, "that "the only forcery he had ufed, was that

"influence

"influence which ſtrong minds naturally "have over weak ones."

But though it be fair ſo to ſtudy the tempers, defects, and weakneſſes of others, as to convert our knowledge of them to the promotion of their benefit and our own; and though it be making a lawful uſe of our penetration to avail ourſelves of the faults of others for "their good to "edification;" yet all deviations from the ſtraight line of truth and ſimplicity; every plot inſidiouſly to turn influence to unfair account; all contrivances to extort from a bribed complaiſance what reaſon and juſtice would refuſe to our wiſhes; theſe are ſome of the operations of that loweſt and moſt deſpicable engine, ſelfiſh cunning, by which *little minds ſometimes govern great ones.*

And, unfortunately, women from their natural deſire to pleaſe, and from their ſometimes doubting by what means this grand end may be beſt effected, are in more danger of being led into diſſimulation

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than men; for diſſimulation is the reſult of weakneſs; it is the refuge of doubt and diſtruſt, rather than of conſcious ſtrength, the dangers of which lie another way. Frankneſs, truth, and ſimplicity, therefore, as they are inexpreſſibly charming, ſo are they peculiarly commendable in women; and nobly evince that while the poſſeſſors of them wiſh to pleaſe, (and why ſhould they not wiſh it?) they diſdain to have recourſe to any thing but what is fair, and juſt, and honourable to effect it; that they ſcorn to attain the moſt deſired end by any but the moſt lawful means. The beauty of ſimplicity is indeed ſo intimately felt and generally acknowledged by all who have a true taſte for perſonal, moral, or intellectual beauty, that women of the deepeſt diſſimulation often find their account in aſſuming an exterior the moſt foreign to their character, and exhibiting the moſt engaging *naïveté*. It is curious to ſee how much *art* they put in practice in order to appear *natural;* and the deep

deſign which is ſet at work to diſplay *ſimplicity*. And indeed this feigned ſimplicity is the moſt miſchievous, becauſe the moſt engaging of all the Proteus forms which Artifice can put on. For the moſt free and bold ſentiments have been ſometimes hazarded with fatal ſucceſs under this unſuſpected maſk. And an innocent, quiet, indolent, artleſs manner, has been adopted as the moſt refined and ſucceſsful accompaniment of ſentiments, ideas, and deſigns, neither artleſs, quiet, nor innocent.

CHAP. XVII.

On diſſipation, and the modern habits of faſhionable life.

PERHAPS the intereſts of true friendſhip, elegant converſation, mental improvement, ſocial pleaſure, maternal duty, and conjugal comfort, never received ſuch a blow as when Faſhion iſſued out that arbitrary and univerſal decree, that *every body muſt be acquainted with every body;* together with that conſequent, authoritative, but rather inconvenient clauſe, that *every body muſt alſo go every where every night.* The implicit and devout obedience paid to this law is incompatible with the very being of friendſhip; for as the circle of acquaintance expands, and it will be continually expanding, the affections will be beaten out into ſuch thin lamina as to

leave little ſolidity remaining. The heart which is continually exhauſting itſelf in profeſſions grows cold and hard. The feelings of kindneſs diminiſh in proportion as the expreſſion of it becomes more diffuſe and indiſcriminate. The very traces of "ſim-"plicity and godly ſincerity," in a delicate female, wear away imperceptibly by conſtant colliſion with the world at large. And perhaps no woman takes ſo little intereſt in the happineſs of her real friends, as ſhe whoſe affections are inceſſantly evaporating in univerſal civilities; as ſhe who is ſaying fond and flattering things at random to a circle of five hundred people every night.

The decline and fall of animated and inſtructive converſation has been in a good meaſure effected by this barbarous project of aſſembling *en maſſe*. An excellent prelate *, with whoſe friendſhip the author was long honoured, and who himſelf excelled

* The late Biſhop Horne.

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in the art of converſaion, uſed to remark, that a few years had brought about a great revolution in the manners of ſociety; that it uſed to be the cuſtom, previouſly to going into company, to think that ſomething was to be communicated or received, taught or learnt; that the powers of the underſtanding were expected to be brought into exerciſe, and that it was therefore neceſſary to quicken the mind, by reading and thinking, for the ſhare the individual might be expected to take in the general diſcourſe; but that now, knowledge, and taſte, and wit, and erudition, ſeemed to be ſcarcely conſidered as neceſſary materials to be brought into the pleaſurable commerce of the world; becauſe now there was little chance of turning them to much account; and therefore, he who poſſeſſed them, and he who poſſeſſed them not, were nearly on a footing.

It is obvious alſo that multitudinous aſſemblies are ſo little favourable to that *cheerfulneſs* which it ſhould ſeem to be their

very end to promote, that if there were any chemical procefs by which the quantum of fpirits animal or intellectual could be afcertained, the diminution would be found to have been inconceivably great, fince the transformation of man and woman from a focial to a gregarious animal.

But if it be true that friendfhip, fociety, and cheerfulnefs, have fuftained fo much injury by this change of manners, how much more pointedly does the remark apply to family happinefs.

Notwithftanding the known fluctuation of manners and the mutability of language, could it be forefeen, when the Apoftle Paul exhorted "married women to be "keepers *at home*," that the time would arrive when that very phrafe would be felected to defignate one of the moft decided acts of diffipation? Could it be forefeen that when a fine lady fhould fend out a notification that on fuch a night fhe fhall be AT HOME, thefe two fignificant words (befides intimating the rarity of the thing)

thing) would present to the mind an image the most *undomestic* which language can convey? Could it be anticipated that the event of one lady's being *at home* could only be effected by the universal concurrence of all her acquaintance to be abroad? That so simple an act should require such complicated co-operation? And that the report that one person would be found in her own house should operate with such an electric force as to empty the houses of all her friends?

My country readers, who may require to have it explained that these two magnetic words *at home*, now possess the powerful influence of drawing together every thing *fine* within the sphere of their attraction, may need also to be apprized, that the guests afterwards are not asked what was *said* by the company, but whether the *crowd* was prodigious; the rule for deciding on the merit of a fashionable society not being by the taste or the spirit, but by the *score* and the *hundred*. The question

of pleaſure, like a parliamentary queſtion, is now carried by numbers. And when two parties modiſh, like two parties political, are run one againſt another on the ſame night, the ſame kind of mortification attends the leader of a defeated minority, the ſame triumph attends the exulting carrier of ſuperior numbers, in the one caſe as in the other. The ſcale of enjoyment is rated by the meaſure of fatigue, and the quantity of inconvenience furniſhes the ſtandard of gratification: the ſmallneſs of the dimenſions to which each perſon is limited on account of the multitudes which muſt divide among them a certain given ſpace, adds to the ſum total of general delight; the aggregate of pleaſure is produced by the proportion of individual ſuffering; and not till every gueſt feels herſelf in the ſtate of a cat in an exhauſted receiver, does the delighted hoſteſs attain the conſummation of that renown which is derived from ſuch overflowing

rooms

rooms as ſhall throw all her competitors at a diſgraceful diſtance.

An eminent divine has ſaid, that either "perſeverance in prayer will make "a man leave off ſinning, or a continu-"ance in ſin will make him leave off "prayer." This remark may be accommodated to thoſe ladies who, while they are devoted to the enjoyments of the world, yet retain conſiderable ſolicitude for the inſtruction of their daughters. But if they are really in earneſt to give them a Chriſtian education, they muſt themſelves renounce a diſſipated life. Or if they reſolve to purſue the chace of pleaſure, they muſt renounce this prime duty. Contraries cannot unite. The moral nurture of a tall daughter can no more be adminiſtered by a mother whoſe time is abſorbed by crowds abroad, than the phyſical nurture of her infant offspring can be ſupplied by her in a perpetual abſence from home. And is not that a prepoſterous affection, which, after leading a mother to devote

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a few months to the inferior duty of furnifhing aliment to the mere animal life, allows her to defert her poft when the more important moral and intellectual cravings require fuftenance? This great object is not to be effected with the fhreds and parings rounded off from the circle of a diffipated life; but in order to its adequate execution, the mother fhould carry it on with the fame fpirit and perfeverance at home, which the father thinks it neceffary to be exerting abroad in his public duty or profeffional engagements.

The ufual vindication (and in theory it has a plaufible found) which has been offered for the large portion of time fpent by women in acquiring ornamental talents is, that they are calculated to make the poffeffor love home, and that they innocently fill up the hours of leifure. The plea has indeed fo promifing an appearance, that it is worth inquiring whether it be in fact true. Do we then, on fairly purfuing the inquiry, difcover that thofe

who have ſpent moſt time in ſuch light acquiſitions, are really remarkable for loving home or ſtaying quietly there? or that when there, they are ſedulous in turning time to the beſt account? I ſpeak not of that rational and reſpectable claſs of women, who, applying (as many of them do) theſe elegant talents to their true purpoſe, employ them to fill up the vacancies of better occupations, and to embelliſh the leiſure of a life actively good. But do we *generally* ſee that even the moſt valuable and ſober part of the reigning female acquiſitions leads their poſſeſſor to ſcenes moſt favourable to the enjoyment of them? to ſcenes which we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe ſhe would ſeek, in order to the more effectual cultivation of ſuch rational pleaſures? To learn to endure, to enjoy, and to adorn ſolitude, ſeems to be one great end for beſtowing accompliſhments, inſtead of making them the motive for hurrying thoſe who have acquired them

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into crouds, in order for their moſt effectual diſplay.

Would not thoſe delightful purſuits, botany and drawing, for inſtance, ſeem likely to court the fields, the woods, and gardens of the paternal ſeat, as more congenial to their nature, and more appropriate to their exerciſe, than barren watering places, deſtitute of a tree, or an herb, or a flower, and not affording an hour's interval from ſucceſſive pleaſures, to profit by the ſcene even if it abounded with the whole vegetable world, from the "Cedar "of Lebanon to the Hyſſop on the wall."

From the mention of watering places, may the author be allowed to ſuggeſt a few remarks on the evils which have ariſen from the general conſpiracy of the gay to uſurp the regions of the ſick; and from their converting the health-reſtoring fountains, meant as a refuge for diſeaſe, into the reſorts of vanity for thoſe who have no diſeaſe but idleneſs?

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This inability of ſtaying at home, as it is one of the moſt infallible, ſo it is one of the moſt dangerous ſymptoms of the reigning mania. It would be more tolerable, did this epidemic malady only break out, as formerly during the winter, or ſome one ſeaſon. Heretofore, the tenantry and the poor, the natural dependants on the rural manſions of the opulent, had ſome definite period to which they might joyfully look forward for the approach of thoſe patrons, part of whoſe buſineſs in life it is to influence by their preſence, to inſtruct by their example, to ſoothe by their kindneſs, and to aſſiſt by their liberality, thoſe whom Providence, in the diſtribution of human lots, has placed under their more immediate protection. Though it would be far from truth to aſſert, that diſſipated people are never charitable, yet I will venture to ſay, that diſſipation is inconſiſtent with the *ſpirit* of charity. That affecting precept followed by ſo gracious a promiſe, "Never turn

"away thy face from any poor man, and "then the face of the Lord ſhall never be "turned away from thee," cannot literally mean that we ſhould *give* to all, as then we ſhould ſoon have nothing left to give: but it ſeems to intimate the habitual attention, the duty of inquiring out all caſes of diſtreſs, in order to judge which are fit to be relieved; now for this inquiry, for this attention, for this ſympathy, the diſſipated have little taſte, and leſs leiſure.

Let a reaſonable conjecture (for calculation would fail!) be made of how large a diminution of the general good has been effected in this ſingle reſpect, by cauſes which, though they do not ſeem important in themſelves, yet make no inconſiderable part of the miſchief ariſing from modern manners: and I ſpeak now to perſons who *intend* to be charitable: what a deduction will be made from the aggregate of charity, by a circumſtance apparently trifling, when we conſider what would be the beneficial effects of that

regular bounty which muſt almoſt unavoidably reſult from the evening walks of a great and benevolent family among the cottages of their own domain: the thouſand little acts of, comparatively, unexpenſive kindneſs which the *ſight* of petty wants and difficulties would excite; wants, which will ſcarcely be felt in the relation; and which will probably be neither ſeen, nor felt, nor fairly repreſented, in their long abſences, by an agent. And what is even almoſt more than the good done, is the habit of mind kept up in thoſe who do it. Would not this habit, exerciſed on the Chriſtian principle, that "even a cup "of cold water," given upon *right motives*, ſhall not loſe its reward; while the giving "all their goods to feed the "poor," without the true *principle* of charity, ſhall profit them nothing; would not this habit, I ſay, and the inculcation of the ſpirit which produces it, be al-

moſt the beſt part of the education of daughters*?

Tranſplant this wealthy and bountiful family periodically, to the frivolous and unintereſting buſtle of the watering place; there it is not denied that frequent public and faſhionable acts of charity may make a part (and it is well they do) of the buſineſs and amuſement of the day; with

* It would be a pleaſant ſummer amuſement for our young ladies of fortune, if they were to preſide at ſuch ſpinning feaſts as are inſtituted at Nuneham for the promotion of virtue and induſtry in their own ſex. Pleaſurable anniverſaries of this kind would ſerve to combine in the minds of the poor two ideas which ought never to be ſeparated, but which *they* are not very forward to unite,—that the great wiſh to make them *happy* as well as good. Occaſional approximations of the rich and poor, for the purpoſes of relief and inſtruction, and annual meetings for the purpoſe of innocent pleaſure, would do much towards wearing away diſcontent, and the conviction that the rich really take an intereſt in their comfort, would contribute to reconcile the lower claſs to that ſtate in which it has pleaſed God to place them.

this latter, indeed, they are ſometimes good-naturedly mixed up. But how ſhall we compare the regular ſyſtematical good theſe perſons would be doing at their own home, with the light, and amuſing, and buſtling bounties of the public place? The illegal raffle at the toy-ſhop, may relieve, it is true, ſome diſtreſs; but this diſtreſs, though it may be real, and if real it ought to be relieved, is far leſs eaſily aſcertained than the wants of the poor round a perſon's own neighbourhood, or the debts of a diſtreſſed tenant. How ſhall we compare the broad ſtream of bounty which ſhould be flowing through, and refreſhing whole diſtricts, with the penurious current of the ſubſcription breakfaſt for the needy muſician, in which the price of the gift is taken out in the diverſion, and in which pleaſure dignifies itſelf with the name of bounty? How ſhall we compare the attention, and time, and zeal, which would otherwiſe, perhaps, be devoted to the village-ſchool, ſpent in hawking about

benefit tickets for a broken player, while the kindneſs of the benefactreſs, perhaps, is rewarded by ſcenes in which her charity is not always repaid by the purity of the exhibition?

Far be it from the author to wiſh to check the full tide of charity wherever it is diſpoſed to flow! Would ſhe could multiply the already abundant ſtreams, and behold every ſource purified! But in the public reſorts there are many who are able and willing to give. In the ſequeſtered, though populous village, there is, perhaps, only one affluent family: the diſtreſs which they do not *behold* will probably not be attended to: the diſtreſs which *they* do not relieve will probably not be relieved at all: the wrongs which *they* do not redreſs will go unredreſſed: the oppreſſed whom *they* do not reſcue will ſink under the tyranny of the oppreſſor. Through their own rural domains too, charity runs in a clearer current,

rent, and is under leſs ſuſpicion of being polluted by that muddy tincture which it is ſometimes apt to contract in paſſing through the impure ſoil of the world.

But to return from this too long digreſſion. The old ſtanding objection formerly brought forward by the prejudices of the other ſex, and too eagerly laid hold on as a ſhelter for indolence and ignorance by ours, was, that intellectual accompliſhments too much abſorbed the thoughts and affections, took women off from the neceſſary attention to domeſtic duties, and ſuperinduced a contempt or neglect of whatever was uſeful. It is peculiarly the character of the preſent day to detect abſurd opinions, and expoſe plauſible theories by the ſimple and deciſive anſwer of experiment; and it is preſumed that this popular error, as well as others, is daily receiving the refutation of actual experience. For it cannot ſurely be maintained on ground that is any longer tenable, that

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acquirements truly rational are calculated to draw off the mind from real duties. Whatever removes prejudices, whatever ſtimulates induſtry, whatever rectifies the judgment, whatever corrects ſelf-conceit, whatever purifies the taſte, and raiſes the underſtanding, will be likely to contribute to moral excellence: to woman moral excellence is the grand object of education; and of moral excellence, domeſtic life is to woman the proper ſphere.

Count over the liſt of females who have made ſhipwreck of their fame and virtue, and have furniſhed the moſt lamentable examples of the dereliction of family duties; and the number will not be found conſiderable who have been led aſtray by the purſuit of knowledge. And if a few deplorable inſtances of this kind be produced, it will commonly be found that there was little infuſion in the minds of ſuch women of that correcting principle without which all other knowledge only "puffeth up."

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The time nightly expended in late female vigils is expended by the light of far other lamps than thoſe which are fed by the ſtudent's oil; and if families *are* to be found who are neglected through too much ſtudy in the miſtreſs, it will probably be proved to be Hoyle, and not Homer, who has robbed her children of her time and affections. For one family which has been neglected by the mother's paſſion for books, an hundred have been deſerted through her paſſion for play. The huſband of a faſhionable woman will not often find that the library is the apartment the expences of which involve him in debt or diſgrace. And for one literary ſlattern, who now manifeſts her indifference to her huſband by the neglect of her perſon, there are ſcores of elegant ſpendthrifts who ruin theirs by exceſs of decoration.

May I digreſs a little while I remark, that I am far from aſſerting that literature has never filled women with vanity and ſelf-conceit; the contrary is too obvious:

and it happens in this as in other caſes, that a few characters conſpicuouſly abſurd, have ſerved to bring a whole order into ridicule. But I will aſſert, that in general thoſe whom books are ſuppoſed to have ſpoiled, would have been ſpoiled in another way without them. She who is a vain pedant becauſe ſhe has read much, has probably that defect in her mind which would have made her a vain fool if ſhe had read nothing. It is not her having more knowledge, but leſs ſenſe, which makes her inſufferable: and ignorance would have added little to her value, for it is not what ſhe has, but what ſhe wants, which makes her unpleaſant. The truth, however, probably lies here, that while her underſtanding was improved, the tempers of her heart were neglected, and that in cultivating the fame of a *ſavante*, ſhe loſt the humility of a Chriſtian. But theſe inſtances too furniſh only a freſh argument for the *general* cultivation of the female mind. The wider dif-

fusion of sound knowledge, would remove that temptation to be vain which may be excited by its rarity.

From the union of an unfurnished mind and a cold heart there results a kind of necessity for dissipation. The very term gives an idea of mental imbecility. That which a working and fatigued mind requires is *relaxation*; it requires something to unbend itself, to slacken its efforts, to relieve it from its exertions; while amusement is the *business* of feeble minds, and is carried on with a length and seriousness incompatible with the refreshing idea of relaxation. There is scarcely any one thing which comes under the description of public amusement, which does not fill the space of three or four hours nightly. Is not that a large proportion of refreshment for a mind, which, generally speaking, has hardly been kept so many hours together on the stretch in the morning, by business, by study, by devotion?

But while we would aſſert that a woman of a cultivated intellect is not driven by the ſame neceſſity as others into the giddy whirl of public reſort; who but regrets that real cultivation does not *inevitably* preſerve her from it? No wonder that inanity of character, that vacuity of mind, that torpid ignorance, ſhould plunge into diſſipation as their natural refuge; ſhould ſeek to bury their inſignificance in the crowd of preſſing multitudes, and hope to eſcape analyſis and detection in the undiſtinguiſhed maſſes of mixed aſſemblies! *There* attrition rubs all bodies ſmooth, and makes all ſurfaces alike; thither ſuperficial and external accompliſhments naturally fly as to their proper ſcene of action; as to a field where competition in *ſuch* perfections is in perpetual exerciſe; where the laurels of admiration are to be won; whence the trophies of vanity may be carried off triumphantly.

It would indeed be matter of little comparative regret, if this corrupt air were

breathed only by thoſe whoſe natural element it ſeems to be; but who can forbear lamenting that the power of faſhion attracts into this impure and unwholeſome atmoſphere, minds alſo of a better make, of higher aims and ends, of more ethereal temper? that it attracts even thoſe who, renouncing enjoyments for which they have a genuine taſte, and which would make them really happy, neglect ſociety they love and purſuits they admire, in order that they may *ſeem* happy and *be* faſhionable in the chace of pleaſures they deſpiſe, and in company they diſapprove! But no correctneſs of taſte, no depth of knowledge, will infallibly preſerve a woman from this contagion, unleſs her heart be impreſſed with a deep Chriſtian conviction that ſhe is accountable for the application of knowledge as well as for the dedication of time. Perhaps if there be any one principle which ſhould more ſedulouſly than another be worked into the

youthful

youthful mind, it is the doctrine of particular as well general responsibility.

The contagion of dissipated manners is so deep, so wide, and fatal, that if I were called upon to assign the predominant cause of the greater part of the misfortunes and corruptions of the great and gay in our days, I should not look for it principally in any obviously great or striking circumstance; not in the practice of notorious vices, not originally in the dereliction of Christian principle; but I should without hesitation ascribe it to a growing, regular, systematic series of amusements; to an incessant, boundless, and not very disreputable DISSIPATION. Other corruptions, though more formidable in appearance, are yet less fatal in some respects, because they leave us intervals to reflect on their turpitude, and spirit to lament their excesses; but dissipation is the more hopeless, as by engrossing almost the entire life, and enervating the whole moral and intellectual system, it leaves neither time

for

for reflection, nor space for self-examination, nor temper for the cherishing of right affections, nor leisure for the operation of sound principles, nor interval for regret, nor vigour to resist temptation, nor energy to struggle for amendment.

The great master of the science of pleasure among the ancients, who reduced it into a system, which he called *the chief good of man*, directed that there should be interval enough between the succession of delights to sharpen inclination; and accordingly instituted periodical days of abstinence; well knowing that gratification was best promoted by previous self-denial. But so little do our votaries of fashion understand the true nature of pleasure, that one amusement is allowed to overtake another without any interval, either for recollection of the past or preparation for the future. Even on their own selfish principle, therefore, nothing can be worse understood than this continuity of enjoyment: for to such a degree of labour

is

is the purſuit carried, that the pleaſures exhauſt inſtead of exhilarating, and the recreations require to be reſted from.

For, not to argue the queſtion on the ground of religion, but merely on that of preſent enjoyment; look abroad and ſee who are the people that complain of wearineſs, liſtleſſneſs, and dejection. You will not find them among the claſs of ſuch as are overdone with work, but with pleaſure. The natural and healthful fatigues of buſineſs may be recruited by ſimple and cheap gratifications; but a ſpirit worn down with the toils of amuſement, requires pleaſures of poignancy; varied, multiplied, ſtimulating!

It has been obſerved by medical writers, that that ſober exceſs in which many indulge, by eating and drinking a little too much at every day's dinner and every night's ſupper, more effectually undermines the health, than thoſe more rare exceſſes by which others now and then break in upon a life of general ſobriety.

This

This illuſtration is not introduced with a deſign to recommend occaſional deviations into groſs vice, by way of a pious receipt for mending the morals; but merely to ſuggeſt that there is a probability that thoſe who are ſometimes driven by unreſiſted paſſion into irregularities which ſhock their cooler reaſon, are more liable to be rouſed to a ſenſe of their danger, than perſons whoſe perceptions of evil are blunted through a round of ſyſtematical, unceaſing, and yet not ſcandalous diſſipation. And when I affirm that this ſyſtem of regular indulgence relaxes the ſoul, enſlaves the heart, bewitches the ſenſes, and thus diſqualifies for pious thought or uſeful action, without having any thing in it ſo groſs as to ſhock the conſcience; and when I hazard an opinion that this ſtate is more formidable, becauſe leſs alarming, than that which bears upon it a more determined character of evil, I no more mean to ſpeak of the latter in ſlight and palliating terms, than I would

intimate,

intimate, becauſe the ſick ſometimes recover from a fever, but ſeldom from a palſy, that a fever is therefore a ſafe or a healthy ſtate.

But there ſeems to be an error in the firſt concoction, out of which the ſubſequent errors ſucceſſively grow. Firſt then, as has been obſerved before, the ſhowy education of women tends chiefly to qualify them for the glare of public aſſemblies; ſecondly, they ſeem in many inſtances to be ſo educated, with a view to the greater probability of their being ſplendidly married; thirdly, it is alleged in vindication of thoſe diſſipated practices, that daughters can only be ſeen, and admirers procured at balls, operas, and aſſemblies: and that therefore, by a natural and neceſſary conſequence, balls, operas, and aſſemblies muſt be followed up without intermiſſion till the object be effected. For the accompliſhment of this object it is that all this complicated machinery had been previouſly ſet a-going, and kept in

motion

motion with an activity not at all ſlackened by the diſordered ſtate of the ſyſtem; for ſome machines, inſtead of being ſtopped, go faſter becauſe the main ſpring is out of order; the only difference being that they go wrong, and ſo the encreaſed rapidity adds only to the quantity of error.

It is alſo, as we have already remarked, an error to fancy that the love of pleaſure exhauſts itſelf by indulgence, and that the very young are chiefly addicted to it. The contrary appears to be true. The deſire often grows with the purſuit in the ſame degree as motion is quickened by the continuance of the gravitating force.

Firſt then, it cannot be thought unfair to trace back the exceſſive fondneſs for amuſement to that mode of education we have elſewhere reprobated. Few of the accompliſhments falſely ſo called, aſſiſt the developement of the faculties: they do not exerciſe the judgment, nor bring into action thoſe powers which fit the heart and mind for the occupations of life; they

they do not prepare women to love home, to underſtand its occupations, to enliven its uniformity, to fulfil its duties, to multiply its comforts: they do not lead to that ſort of experimental logic, if I may ſo ſpeak, compounded of obſervation and reflection, which makes up the moral ſcience of life and manners. Talents which have *diſplay* for their object deſpiſe the narrow ſtage of home: they demand mankind for their ſpectators, and the world for their theatre.

While we cannot help ſhrinking a little from the idea of a delicate young creature, lovely in perſon, and engaging in mind and manners, ſacrificing nightly at the public ſhrine of Faſhion, at once the votary and the victim; we cannot help figuring to ourſelves how much more intereſting ſhe would appear in the eyes of a man of ſenſe and feeling, did he behold her in the more endearing ſituations of domeſtic life. And who can forbear wiſhing, that the good ſenſe, good taſte, and delicacy of the

men had rather led them to prefer ſeeking companions for life in the almoſt ſacred quiet of a virtuous home? *There* they might have had the means of ſeeing and admiring thoſe amiable beings in the beſt point of view: *there* they might have been enabled to form a juſter eſtimate of female worth, than is likely to be obtained in ſcenes where ſuch qualities and talents as might be expected to add to the ſtock of domeſtic comfort muſt neceſſarily be kept in the back ground, and where ſuch only *can* be brought into view as are not particularly calculated to inſure the certainty of home delights.

> O! did they keep their perſons freſh and new,
> How would they pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> And win by rareneſs!

But by what unaccountable infatuation is it that men too, even men of underſtanding, join in the confederacy againſt their own happineſs, by looking for their home companions in the reſorts of vanity?

Why do not ſuch men riſe ſuperior to the illuſions of faſhion? Why do they not uniformly ſeek her who is to preſide in *their* families in the boſom of her own? in the practice of every domeſtic duty, in the exerciſe of every amiable virtue, in the exertion of every elegant accompliſhment? thoſe accompliſhments of which we have been reprobating, not the poſſeſſion, but the application? *there* they would find her exerting them to their true end, to enliven buſineſs, to animate retirement, to embelliſh the charming ſcene of family delights, to heighten the intereſting pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe, and, riſing in juſt gradation to their nobleſt object, to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour.

If, indeed, woman were mere outſide, form and face only, and if *mind* made up no part of her compoſition, it would follow that a ball-room was quite as appropriate a place for chooſing a wife, as an exhibition room for chooſing a picture. But,

But, inaſmuch as women are not mere portraits, their value not being determinable by a glance of the eye, it follows that a different mode of appreciating their value, and a different place for viewing them antecedent to their being individually ſelected, is deſirable. The two caſes differ alſo in this, that if a man ſelect a picture for himſelf from among all its exhibited competitors, and bring it to his own houſe, the picture being paſſive, he is able to *fix* it there: while the wife, picked up at a public place, and accuſtomed to inceſſant diſplay, will not, it is probable, when brought home, ſtick ſo quietly to the ſpot where he fixes her; but will eſcape to the exhibition-room again, and continue to be diſplayed at every ſubſequent exhibition, juſt as if ſhe were not become private property, and had never been definitively diſpoſed of.

It is the novelty of a thing which aſtoniſhes us, and not its abſurdity: objects may be ſo long kept before the eye that

it begins no longer to obſerve them; or may be brought into ſuch cloſe contact with it, that it does not diſcern them. Long habit ſo reconciles us to almoſt any thing, that the groſſeſt improprieties ceaſe to ſtrike us when they once make a part of the common courſe of action. This, by the way, is a ſtrong reaſon for carefully ſifting every opinion and every practice before we let them incorporate into the maſs of our habits, for after that time they will be no more examined.—Would it not be accounted prepoſterous for a young man to ſay he had fancied ſuch a lady would dance a better minuet becauſe he had ſeen her behave devoutly at Church, and *therefore* had choſen her for his partner? and yet he is not thought at all abſurd when he intimates that he choſe a partner for life becauſe he was pleaſed with her at a ball. Surely the place of chooſing and the motive of choice, would be juſt as appropriate in one caſe as in the

 other,

other, and the miſtake, if the judgment failed, not *quite* ſo ſerious.

There is, among the more elevated claſſes of ſociety, a certain ſet of perſons who are pleaſed excluſively to call themſelves, and whom others by a ſort of compelled courteſy are pleaſed to call, *the fine world*. This ſmall detachment conſider their ſituation with reſpect to the reſt of mankind, juſt as the ancient Grecians did theirs; that is, as the Grecians thought there were but two ſorts of beings, and that all who were not Grecians were barbarians; ſo this *certain ſet* conceives of ſociety as reſolving itſelf into two diſtinct claſſes, the *fine world* and the *people;* to which laſt claſs they turn over all who do not belong to their little *coterie*, however high their rank, or fortune, or merit. Celebrity, in their eſtimation, is not beſtowed by birth or talents, but by being connected with *them*. They have laws, immunities, privileges, and almoſt a language of their own; they form a kind

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of diſtinct *caſt*, and with a ſort of *eſprit du corps* detach themſelves from others, even in general ſociety, by an affectation of diſtance and coldneſs; and only whiſper and ſmile in their own little groups of the initiated; their confines are jealouſly guarded, and their privileges are incommunicable.

In this ſociety a young man loſes his natural character, which, whatever it might have been originally, is melted down and caſt into the one prevailing mould of Faſhion; all the ſtrong, native, diſcriminating qualities of his mind being made to take one ſhape, one ſtamp, one ſuperſcription! However varied and diſtinct might have been the materials which nature threw into the crucible, plaſtic Faſhion takes care that they ſhall all be the ſame, or at leaſt appear the ſame, when they come out of the mould. A young man in ſuch an artificial ſtate of ſociety, accuſtomed to the voluptuous eaſe, refined luxuries, ſoft accommodations, obſe-

obſequious attendance, and all the unreſtrained indulgencies of a faſhionable club, is not to be expected after marriage to take very cordially to a home, unleſs very extraordinary exertions are made to amuſe, to attach, and to intereſt him: and he is not likely to lend a very helping hand to the happineſs of the union, whoſe moſt laborious exertions have hitherto been little more than a ſelfiſh ſtratagem to reconcile health with pleaſure. Exceſs of gratification has only ſerved to make him irritable and exacting; it will of courſe be no part of his project to make ſacrifices, he will expect to receive them: and what would appear incredible to the *Paladins* of gallant times, and the *Chevaliers Preux* of more heroic days, even in the neceſſary buſineſs of eſtabliſhing himſelf for life, he ſometimes is more diſpoſed to expect attentions than to make advances.

 Thus

Thus the indolent ſon of faſhion, with a thouſand fine, but dormant qualities, which a bad tone of manners forbids him to bring into exerciſe; with real energies which that tone does not allow him to diſcover, and an unreal apathy which it commands him to feign; with the heart of an hero, perhaps, if called into the field, affects at home the manners of a Sybarite; and he who, with a Roman or what is more, with a Britiſh valour, would leap into the gulph at the call of public duty,

Yet in the ſoft and piping time of peace,

when faſhion has reſumed her rights, would murmur if a roſe leaf lay double under him.

The clubs above alluded to, as has been ſaid, generate and cheriſh luxurious habits, from their perfect eaſe, undreſs, liberty, and inattention to the diſtinctions of

of rank: they promote a love of play, and in ſhort, every temper and ſpirit which tends to *undomeſticate;* and what adds to the miſchief is, all this is attained at a cheap rate compared with what may be procured at home in the ſame ſtyle.

Theſe indulgencies, and this habit of mind, gratify ſo many paſſions, that a woman can never hope ſucceſsfully to counteract the evil by ſupplying at home gratifications which are *of the ſame kind*, or which gratify the *ſame* habits. Now a paſſion for gratifying vanity, and a ſpirit of diſſipation *is* a paſſion of the ſame kind; and therefore, though for a few weeks, a man who has choſen his wife in the public haunts, and this wife a woman made up of *accompliſhments*, may, from the novelty of the connexion and of the ſcene, continue domeſtic; yet in a little time ſhe will find that thoſe paſſions, to which ſhe has truſted for making pleaſant the married life of her huſband, will crave the ſtill higher pleaſures of the club; and while theſe are purſued,

fued, ſhe will be conſigned over to ſolitary evenings at home, or driven back to the old diſſipations.

To conquer the paſſion for club gratifications, a woman muſt not ſtrive to feed it with ſufficient aliment of the ſame kind in her ſociety, either at home or abroad; ſhe muſt ſupplant and overcome it by a paſſion of a different nature, which Providence has kindly planted within us; I mean, by inſpiring him with the love of fireſide enjoyments. But to qualify herſelf for adminiſtering theſe, ſhe muſt cultivate her underſtanding, and her heart, and her temper, acquiring at the ſame time that modicum of accompliſhments ſuited to his taſte, which may qualify her for poſſeſſing, both for him and for herſelf, greater varieties of ſafe recreation.

One great cauſe of the want of attachment in theſe modiſh couples is, that by living in the world at large, they are not driven to depend on each other as the chief ſource of comfort. Now it is pretty clear,

clear, in ſpite of modern theories, that the very frame and being of ſocieties, whether great or ſmall, public or private, is jointed and glued together by dependence. Thoſe attachments, which ariſe from, and are compacted by, a ſenſe of mutual wants, mutual affection, mutual benefit, and mutual obligation, are the cement which ſecure the union of the family as well as of the ſtate.

Unfortunately, when two young perſons of the above deſcription marry, the union is ſometimes conſidered rather as the end than the beginning of an engagement: the attachment of each to the other is rather viewed as an object already completed, than as one which marriage is to confirm more cloſely. But the companion for life is not always choſen from the pureſt motive; ſhe is ſelected, perhaps, becauſe ſhe is admired by other men, rather than becauſe ſhe poſſeſſes in an eminent degree thoſe peculiar qualities which are likely to conſtitute the individual happineſs of the man

man who chooſes her. Vanity uſurps the place of affection; and indolence ſwallows up the judgment. Not happineſs, but ſome eaſy ſubſtitute for happineſs, is purſued; and a choice which may excite envy, rather than produce ſatisfaction, is adopted as the means of effecting it.

The pair, not *matched but joined*, ſet out ſeparately with their independent and individual purſuits. Whether it made a part of their original plan or not, that they ſhould be indiſpenſably neceſſary to each other's comfort, the ſenſe of this neceſſity, probably not very ſtrong at firſt, rather diminiſhes than increaſes by time; they live ſo much in the world, and ſo little together, that to ſtand well with their *own ſet* continues the favourite project of each; while to ſtand well with each other is conſidered as an under part of the plot in the drama of life. Whereas, did they ſtart in the conjugal race with the fixed idea that they were to look to each other for their chief worldly happineſs, not only principle,

ciple, but prudence, and even felfifhnefs, would convince them of the neceffity of fedulouflly cultivating each other's efteem and affection as the grand means of promoting that happinefs. But vanity, and the defire of flattery and applaufe, ftill continue to operate. Even after the hufband is brought to feel a perfect indifference for his wife, he ftill likes to fee her decorated in a ftyle which may ferve to juftify his choice. He encourages her to fet off her perfon, not fo much for his own gratification, as that his felf-love may be flattered, by her continuing to attract the admiration of thofe whofe opinion is the ftandard by which he meafures his fame, and which fame is to ftand him in the ftead of happinefs. Thus is fhe neceffarily expofed to the two-fold temptation of being at once neglected by her hufband, and exhibited as an object of attraction to other men. If fhe efcape this complicated danger, fhe will be indebted

for

for her preſervation not to his prudence, but to her own principles.

In ſome of theſe modiſh marriages, inſtead of the decorous neatneſs, the pleaſant intercourſe, and the mutual warmth of communication of the once ſocial dinner; the late and unintereſting meal is commonly hurried over by the languid and ſlovenly pair, that the one may have time to dreſs for his club, and the other for her party. And in theſe cold abſtracted *têtes-à-têtes*, they often take as little pains to entertain each other, as if the one was preciſely the only human being in the world in whoſe eyes the other did not feel it neceſſary to appear agreeable.

Now if theſe young and perhaps really amiable perſons could ſtruggle againſt the imperious tyranny of faſhion, and contrive to paſs a little time together, ſo as to get acquainted with each other; and if each would live in the lively and conſcientious exerciſe of thoſe talents and attractions

which

which they ſometimes know how to produce on occaſions not *quite* ſo juſtifiable; they would, I am perſuaded, often find out each other to be very agreeable people. And both of them, delighted and delighting, receiving and beſtowing happineſs, would no longer be driven to the neceſſity of perpetually eſcaping from home as from the only ſcene which offers no poſſible materials for pleaſure. The ſteady and growing attachment, improved by unbounded confidence and mutual interchange of ſentiments; judgment ripening, and experience ſtrengthening that eſteem which taſte and inclination firſt inſpired; each party ſtudying to promote the eternal as well as temporal happineſs of the other; each correcting the errors, improving the principles, and confirming the faith of the beloved object: this would enrich the feeling heart with gratifications which the inſolvent world has not to beſtow: ſuch an heart would compare its intereſting domeſtic ſcenes with the vapid pleaſures of

public resort, till it would fly to its own home, not from necessity, but taste; not from custom, but choice; not from duty, but delight.

It may seem a contradiction to have asserted, that beings of all ages, tempers, and talents, should with such unremitting industry follow up any way of life, if they did not find some enjoyment in it: yet I appeal to the bosoms of these incessant hunters in the chace of pleasure, whether they are really happy. No:—in the full tide and torrent of diversion, in the full blaze of gaiety and splendor,

The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy?

But there is an anxious restlessness excited by the pursuit, which, if not interesting, is bustling. There is the dread, and partly the discredit, of being suspected of having one hour unmortgaged, not only to successive, but contending engagements; this it is, and not the pleasure of the engagement itself, which is the object. There is an

an agitation in the arrangements which imposes itself on the vacant heart for happiness. There is a tumult kept up in the spirits which is a busy though treacherous substitute for comfort. The multiplicity of solicitations soothes vanity. The very regret that they cannot be all accepted has its charms; for dignity is flattered because refusal implies importance, and pre-engagement intimates celebrity. Then there is the joy of being invited when others are neglected; the triumph of shewing our less modish friend that we are going where she cannot come; and the feigned regret at being *obliged* to go, assumed before her who is half wild at being obliged to stay away. There is the secret art of exciting envy in the very act of bespeaking compassion; and of challenging respect by representing their engagements as duties, oppressive indeed but indispensable. These are some of the supplemental shifts for happiness with which vanity contrives to

feed her hungry followers, too eager to be nice *.

In the fucceffion of open houfes, in which pleafure is to be ftarted and purfued on any given night, the actual place is never taken into the account of enjoyment: the fcene of which is always fuppofed to lie in any place where her votaries happen not to be. Pleafure has no prefent tenfe: but in the houfe which her purfuers have juft quitted, and in the houfe to which they are juft haftening, a ftranger might conclude the flippery goddefs had really fixed her throne, and that her worfhippers confidered the exifting fcene, which they feem compelled to fuffer, but from which

* The precaution which is taken againft the poffibility of being unengaged by the long interval between the invitation and the period of its accomplifhment, reminds us of what hiftorians remark of the citizens of ancient Crotona, who ufed to fend their invitations a year before the time, that the guefts might prepare both their drefs and their appetite for the vifit.

they are eager to eſcape, as really detaining them from ſome poſitive joy to which they are flying in the next crowd; till, if he met them there, he would find the component parts of each preciſely the ſame. He would hear the ſame ſtated phraſes interrupted, not anſwered, by the ſame ſtated replies, the unfiniſhed ſentence "driven "adverſe to the winds," by preſſing multitudes; the ſame warm regret mutually exchanged by two *friends* (who had been expreſsly denied to each other all the winter) that they had not met before; the ſame ſoft and ſmiling ſorrow at being *torn away* from each other now; the ſame avowed anxiety to renew the meeting, with perhaps the ſame ſecret reſolution to avoid it. He would hear deſcribed with the ſame pathetic earneſtneſs the difficulties of getting into this houſe, and the dangers of getting out of the laſt! the perilous retreat of former nights, effected amidſt the ſhock of chariots, and the clang of contending coachmen! a retreat in-

deed effected with a skill and peril little inferior to that of the *ten thousand*, and detailed with far juster triumph: for that which happened only once in a life to the Grecian hero, occurs to these British heroines every night. There is one point of resemblance, indeed, between them in which the comparison fails; for the commander, with a *mauvaise honte* at which a true female veteran would blush, is remarkable for never *naming himself*.

With "mysterious reverence" I forbear to descant on those serious and interesting rites, for the more august and solemn celebration of which, Fashion nightly convenes these splendid myriads to her more sumptuous temples. Rites! which, when engaged in with due devotion, absorb the whole soul, and call every passion into exercise, except indeed those of love, and peace, and kindness, and gentleness. Inspiring rites! which stimulate fear, rouse hope, kindle zeal, quicken dulness, sharpen discernment,

ment, exercife memory, inflame curiofity! Rites! in fhort, in the due performance of which all the energies and attentions, all the powers and abilities, all the abftraction and exertion, all the diligence and devotednefs, all the facrifice of time, all the contempt of eafe, all the neglect of fleep, all the oblivion of care, all the rifks of fortune (half of which, if directed to their true objects, would change the very face of the world): all thefe are concentrated to one point; a point in which the wife and the weak, the learned and the ignorant, the fair and the frightful, the fprightly and the dull, the rich and the poor, the patrician and plebeian, meet in one common and uniform equality; an equality as religioufly refpected in thefe folemnities, in which all diftinctions are levelled at a blow, (and of which the very fpirit is therefore democratical,) as it is combated in all other inftances.

 Behold

Behold four Kings in majeſty rever'd,
With hoary whiſkers and a forked beard;
And four fair Queens, whoſe hands ſuſtain a flow'r,
Th' expreſſive emblem of their ſofter pow'r;
Four Knaves in garbs ſuccinct, a truſty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And party-colour'd troops, a ſhining train,
Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain *.

* Rape of the Lock.

CHAP. XVIII.

On public amuſements.

IT is not propoſed to enter the long conteſted field of controverſy as to the individual amuſements which may be conſidered as ſafe and lawful for thoſe women of the higher claſs who make a ſtrict profeſſion of Chriſtianity. The judgment they will be likely to form for themſelves on the ſubject, and the plan they will conſequently adopt, will depend much on the clearneſs or obſcurity of their religious views, and on the greater or leſs progreſs they have made in their Chriſtian courſe. It is in their choice of amuſements that you are able, in ſome meaſure, to get acquainted with the real diſpoſitions of mankind. In their *buſineſs*, in the leading employments of life, their path is in a good degree chalked

out for them: there is in this respect a sort of general character, wherein the greater part, more or less, must coincide. But in their *pleasures* the choice is voluntary, the taste is self-directed, the propensity is independent; and of course the habitual state, the genuine bent and bias of the temper, are most likely to be seen in those pursuits which every person is at liberty to choose for himself.

When a truly religious principle shall have acquired such a degree of force as to produce that conscientious and habitual improvement of time before recommended, it will discover itself by an increasing indifference and even deadness to those pleasures which are interesting to the world at large. A woman under the predominating influence of such a principle, will begin to discover that the same thing which in itself is innocent may yet be comparatively wrong. She will begin to feel that there are many amusements and employments which, though

they

they have nothing cenſurable in themſelves, yet if they be allowed to intrench on hours which ought to be dedicated to ſtill better purpoſes; or if they are protracted to an undue length; or above all, if by ſoftening and relaxing her mind and diſſipating her ſpirits, they ſo indiſpoſe her for better purſuits as to render ſubſequent duties a burden, they become in that caſe clearly wrong for her, whatever they may be for others. Now as temptations of this ſort are the peculiar dangers of better kind of characters, the ſacrifice of ſuch little gratifications as may *have no great harm in them*, come in among the daily calls to ſelf-denial in a Chriſtian.

The fine arts, for inſtance, polite literature, elegant ſociety, theſe are among the lawful, and liberal, and becoming recreations of higher life; yet if even theſe be cultivated to the neglect or excluſion of ſeverer duties; if they interfere with ſerious ſtudies, or diſqualify the mind for religious exerciſes, it is an intima-

tion

tion that they have been too much indulged; and, under ſuch circumſtances, it might be the part of Chriſtian circumſpection to inquire if the time devoted to them ought not to be abridged. Above all, a tender conſcience will never loſe ſight of one ſafe rule of determining in all doubtful caſes: if the point be ſo nice that though we hope upon the whole there *may* be no harm in engaging in it, we may at leaſt be always quite ſure that there *can* be no harm in letting it alone. The adoption of this ſimple rule would put a period to much unprofitable caſuiſtry.

The principle of being reſponſible for the uſe of time once fixed in the mind, the conſcientious Chriſtian will be making a continual progreſs in the great art of turning time to account. In the firſt ſtages of her religion ſhe will have abſtained from pleaſures which began a *little* to wound the conſcience, or which aſſumed a queſtionable ſhape; but ſhe will probably have abſtained

abſtained with regret, and with a ſecret wiſh that conſcience *could* have permitted her to keep well with pleaſure and religion too. But you may diſcern in her ſubſequent courſe that ſhe has reached a more advanced ſtage, by her beginning to neglect even ſuch pleaſures or employments as have no moral turpitude in them, but are merely what are called innocent. This relinquiſhment ariſes, not ſo much from her feeling ſtill more the reſtraints of religion, as from the improvement in her religious taſte. Pleaſures cannot now attach her merely from their being innocent, unleſs they are likewiſe intereſting, and to be intereſting they muſt be conſonant to her ſuperinduced views. She is not contented to ſpend a large portion of her time harmleſsly, it muſt be ſpent profitably alſo. Nay, if ſhe be indeed earneſtly " preſſing towards the " mark," it will not be even enough for her that her preſent purſuit be good if ſhe be convinced that it might be ſtill better.

better. Her contempt of ordinary enjoyments will increaſe in a direct proportion to her increaſed reliſh for thoſe pleaſures which religion enjoins and beſtows. So that at length if it were poſſible to ſuppoſe that an angel could come down to take off as it were the interdict, and to invite her to reſume all the pleaſures ſhe had renounced, and to reſume them with complete impunity, ſhe would reject the invitation, becauſe, from an improvement in her ſpiritual taſte, ſhe would deſpiſe thoſe delights from which ſhe had at firſt abſtained through fear. Till her will and affections come heartily to be engaged in the ſervice of God, the progreſs will not be comfortable; but when once they are ſo engaged, the attachment to this ſervice will be cordial, and her heart will not deſire to go back and toil again in the drudgery of the world. For her religion has not ſo much given her a new creed, as a new heart, and a new life.

As her views are become new, ſo her tempers, diſpoſitions, taſtes, actions, purſuits, choice of company, choice of amuſements, are new alſo; her employment of time is changed; her turn of converſation is altered; "old things are paſſed away, "all things are become new." In diſſipated and worldly ſociety, ſhe will ſeldom fail to feel a ſort of uneaſineſs, which will produce one of theſe two effects; ſhe will either, as proper ſeaſons preſent themſelves, ſtruggle hard to introduce ſuch ſubjects as may be uſeful to others; or, ſuppoſing that ſhe finds herſelf unable to effect this, ſhe will, as far as ſhe prudently can, abſent herſelf from all unprofitable kind of ſociety. Indeed her manner of conducting herſelf under theſe circumſtances may ſerve to furniſh her with a teſt of her own ſincerity. For while people are contending for a little more of this amuſement, and pleading for a little extenſion of that gratification, and fighting in order that they may hedge in

a little more territory to their pleaſure ground, they are exhibiting a kind of evidence againſt themſelves, that they are not yet "renewed in the ſpirit of their mind."

It has been warmly urged as an objection to certain religious books, and particularly againſt a recent work of high worth and celebrity, by a diſtinguiſhed layman*, that they have ſet the ſtandard of ſelf-denial higher than reaſon or even than Chriſtianity requires. Theſe works do indeed elevate the general tone of religion to a higher pitch than is quite convenient to thoſe who are at infinite pains to conſtruct a comfortable and comprehenſive plan, which ſhall unite the queſtionable pleaſures of this world with the promiſed happineſs of the next. I ſay it has been ſometimes objected, even by thoſe readers who on the whole greatly admire the particular work alluded to, that it is unreaſonably ſtrict in the preceptive and prohibitory parts; and eſpecially that it in-

* Practical View, &c. by Mr. Wilberforce.

dividually and ſpecifically forbids certain faſhionable amuſements, with a ſeverity not to be found in the ſcriptures; and is ſcrupulouſly rigid in condemning diverſions againſt which nothing is ſaid in the New Teſtament. Each objector, however, is ſo far reaſonable, as only to beg quarter for her own favourite diverſion, and generouſly abandons the defence of thoſe in which ſhe herſelf has no particular pleaſure.

But theſe objectors do not ſeem to underſtand the true genius of Chriſtianity. They do not conſider that it is the character of the Goſpel to exhibit a ſcheme of principles, of which it is the tendency to infuſe ſuch a ſpirit of holineſs as muſt be utterly incompatible, not only with cuſtoms decidedly vicious, but with the very ſpirit of worldly pleaſure. They do not conſider that Chriſtianity is neither a table of ethics, nor a ſyſtem of opinions, nor a bundle of rods to puniſh, nor an exhibition of rewards to allure, nor a ſcheme of reſtraints to terrify, nor merely a code of

laws to reſtrict; but it is a new principle infuſed into the heart by the word and the ſpirit of God; out of which principle will inevitably grow right opinions, renewed affections, correct morals, pure deſires, heavenly tempers, and holy habits, with an invariable deſire of pleaſing God, and a conſtant fear of offending him. A real Chriſtian, whoſe heart is once thoroughly imbued with this principle, can no more return to the amuſements of the world, than a philoſopher can be refreſhed with the diverſions of the vulgar, or a man be amuſed with the recreations of a child. The New Teſtament is not a mere ſtatute-book: it is not a table where every offence is detailed, and its correſponding penalty annexed: it is not ſo much a *compilation*, as a *ſpirit* of laws: it does not ſo much prohibit every individual wrong practice, as ſuggeſt a temper and implant a general principle with which every wrong practice is incompatible. It did not, for inſtance, ſo much attack the then reigning and cor-

rupt faſhions, which were probably, like the faſhions of other countries, temporary and local, as it ſtruck at that worldlineſs, which is the root and ſtock from which all corrupt faſhions proceed.

The prophet Iſaiah, who addreſſed himſelf more particularly to the Iſraelitiſh women, inveighed not only againſt vanity, luxury, and immodeſty, in general; but with great propriety cenſured even thoſe preciſe inſtances of each, to which the women of rank in the particular country he was addreſſing were eſpecially addicted; nay, he enters into the minute detail * of their very perſonal decorations, and brings ſpecific charges againſt ſeveral inſtances of their levity and extravagance of apparel; meaning, however, chiefly to cenſure the turn of character which theſe indicated. But the Goſpel of Chriſt, which was to be addreſſed to all ages, ſtations, and countries, ſeldom contains any ſuch detailed animadverſions; for though many of the cenſur-

* Iſaiah, chap. iii.

able modes which the prophet ſo ſeverely reprobated, continued probably to be ſtill prevalent in Jeruſalem in the days of our Saviour, yet how little would it have ſuited the univerſality of his miſſion, to have confined his preaching to ſuch local, limited, and fluctuating cuſtoms! not but that there are many texts which actually *do* define the Chriſtian conduct as well as temper, with ſufficient particularity to ſerve as a condemnation of many practices which are pleaded for, and often to point pretty directly at them.

It would be well for thoſe modiſh Chriſtians who vindicate exceſſive vanity in dreſs, expence, and decoration, on the principle of their being mere matters of indifference, and no where prohibited in the Goſpel, to conſider that ſuch practices ſtrongly mark the temper and ſpirit with which they are connected, and in that view are ſo little creditable to the Chriſtian profeſſion, as to furniſh a juſt ſubject of ſuſpicion againſt the piety of thoſe who indulge in them.

Had Peter, on that memorable day when he added three thouſand converts to the Church by a ſingle ſermon, narrowed his ſubject to a remonſtrance againſt this diverſion, or that public place, or the other vain amuſement, it might indeed have ſuited the caſe of ſome of the female Jewiſh converts who were preſent; but ſuch reſtrictions as might have been appropriate to *them*, would probably not have applied to the caſes of the Parthians and Medes, of which his audience was partly compoſed; or ſuch as might have belonged to them would have been totally inapplicable to the Cretes and Arabians; or again, thoſe which ſuited theſe would not have applied to the Elamites and Meſopotamians. By ſuch partial and circumſcribed addreſſes, his multifarious audience, compoſed of all nations and countries, would not have been, as we are told they were, "pricked to the heart." But when he preached on the broad ground of general "repentance and remiſſion of ſins in the

"name of Jeſus Chriſt," it was no wonder that they all cried out, "What ſhall "we do?" Theſe collected foreigners, at their return home, muſt have found very different uſages to be corrected in their different countries; of courſe a detailed reſtriction of the popular abuſes at Jeruſalem, would have been of little uſe to ſtrangers returning to their reſpective nations. The ardent Apoſtle, therefore, acted more conſiſtently in communicating to them the large and comprehenſive ſpirit of the Goſpel, which ſhould at once involve all their ſcattered and ſeparate duties, as well as reprove all their ſcattered and ſeparate corruptions: for the whole always includes a part, and the greater involves the leſs. Chriſt and his diſciples, inſtead of limiting their condemnation to the peculiar vanities reprehended by Iſaiah, embraced the very ſoul and principle of them all, in ſuch exhortations as the following: "Be ye not "conformed to the world:"—"If any "man love the world, the love of the

"Father

"Father is not in him:—"The faſhion "of this world paſſeth away." Our Lord and his Apoſtles, whoſe future unſelected audience was to be made up out of the various inhabitants of the whole world, attacked the evil *heart*, out of which all thoſe incidental, local, peculiar, and popular corruptions proceeded.

In the time of Chriſt and his immediate followers, the luxury and intemperance of the Romans had ariſen to a pitch before unknown in the world; but as the ſame Goſpel which its Divine Author and his diſciples were then preaching to the hungry and neceſſitous, was afterwards to be preached to high and low, not excepting the Roman emperors themſelves; the large precept, "Whether ye eat or drink, "or whatever you do, do all to the glory "of God," was likely to be of more general uſe, than any ſeparate exhortation to temperance, to thankfulneſs, to moderation as to quantity or expence; which laſt indeed muſt always be left in ſome

 degree

degree to the judgment and circumſtances of the individual.

When the Apoſtle of the Gentiles viſited the "Saints of Cæſar's houſehold," he could hardly fail to have heard, nor could he have heard without abhorrence, of ſome of the faſhionable amuſements in the court of Nero. He muſt have reflected with peculiar indignation on many things which were practiſed in the Circenſian games: yet, inſtead of pruning this corrupt tree, and ſingling out even the inhuman gladiatorial ſports for the object of his condemnation, he laid his axe to the root of all corruption, by preaching to them that Goſpel of Chriſt of which "he was not aſhamed;" and ſhewing to them that believed, that "it was the power "of God and the wiſdom of God." Of this Goſpel the great object was, to attack not one popular evil, but the whole body of ſin. Now the doctrine of Chriſt crucified was the moſt appropriate means for deſtroying this; for by what other means could

could the fervid imagination of the Apoſtle have ſo powerfully inforced the heinouſneſs of ſin, as by inſiſting on the coſtlineſs of the ſacrifice which was offered for its expiation? It is ſomewhat remarkable, that about the very time of his preaching to the Romans, the public taſte had ſunk to ſuch an exceſs of depravity, that the very women engaged in thoſe ſhocking encounters with the gladiators.

But, in the firſt place, it was better that the right practice of his hearers ſhould grow out of the right principle; and next, his ſpecifically reprobating theſe diverſions might have had this ill effect, that ſucceeding ages, ſeeing that they in their amuſements came ſomewhat ſhort of thoſe dreadful exceſſes of the poliſhed Romans, would only have plumed themſelves on their own comparative ſuperiority; and, on this principle, even the bull-fights of Madrid might in time have had their panegyriſts. The truth is, the Apoſtle knew that ſuch abo-

minable corruptions could never ſubſiſt together with Chriſtianity, and, in fact, the honour of aboliſhing theſe barbarous diverſions, was reſerved for Conſtantine, the firſt Chriſtian emperor.

Beſides, the Apoſtles, by inveighing againſt ſome *particular* diverſions, might have ſeemed to ſanction all which they did not actually cenſure: and as, in the lapſe of time and the revolution of governments, cuſtoms change and manners fluctuate; had a minute reprehenſion of the faſhions of the then exiſting age been publiſhed in the New Teſtament, that portion of ſcripture muſt in time have become obſolete, even in that very ſame country, when the faſhions themſelves ſhould have changed. Paul and his brother Apoſtles knew that their epiſtles would be the oracles of the Chriſtian world, when theſe temporary diverſions would be forgotten. In conſequence of this knowledge, by the univerſal precept to avoid "the luſt

"of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the "pride of life," they have prepared a laſting antidote againſt the *principle* of all corrupt pleaſures, which will ever remain equally applicable to the looſe faſhions of all ages and of every country to the end of the world.

Therefore, to vindicate diverſions which are in themſelves unchriſtian, on the pretended ground that they are not ſpecifically condemned in the Goſpel, would be little leſs abſurd than if the heroes of Newmarket ſhould bring it as a proof that their periodical meetings are not condemned in Scripture, becauſe St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, did not ſpeak againſt theſe diverſions; and that in availing himſelf of the Iſthmian games, as a happy illuſtration of the Chriſtian race, he did not drop any cenſure on the practice itſelf: a practice which was indeed as much more pure than the races of Chriſtian Britain, as the moderation of being con-

contented with the triumph of a crown of leaves, is ſuperior to that criminal ſpirit of gambling which iniquitouſly enriches the victor by beggaring the competitor.

Local abuſes, as we have ſaid, were not the object of a book whoſe inſtructions were to be of univerſal and laſting application. As a proof of this, little is ſaid in the Goſpel of the then prevailing corruption of polygamy; nothing againſt the ſavage cuſtom of expoſing children, or even againſt ſlavery; nothing expreſsly againſt ſuicide or duelling; the laſt Gothic cuſtom, indeed, did not exiſt among the crimes of *Paganiſm*. But is there not an implied prohibition againſt polygamy in the general denunciation againſt adultery? Is not expoſing of children condemned in that charge againſt the Romans, that "they were without natural affection?" Is there not a ſtrong cenſure againſt ſlavery conveyed in the command to "do "unto others as you would have them "do

"do unto you?" and against suicide and duelling, in the general prohibition against murder, which is strongly enforced and affectingly amplified by the solemn manner in which murder is traced back to its first seed of anger, in the sermon on the mount?

Thus it is clear, that when Christ sent the Gospel to all nations, he meant that that Gospel should proclaim those prime truths, general laws, and fundamental doctrines, which must necessarily involve the prohibition of all individual, local, and inferior errors; errors which could not have been specifically guarded against, without having a distinct Gospel for every country, or without swelling the divine volume into such inconvenient length as would have defeated one great end of its promulgation *. And while its leading principles are of universal application, it

* "To the *poor* the Gospel is preached." Luke, vii. 22.

particularly attended to, the love to his dearest relative, of a third, (a love, by the way, not only allowed but commanded in Scripture,) were brought forward as excuses for not attending to the important business of religion. The consequence, however, was the same to all. "None "of those which were bidden shall taste "of my supper." If then things *innocent*, things *necessary*, things *laudable*, things *commanded*, become sinful, when by unseasonable or excessive indulgence they detain the heart and affections from God, how vain will all those arguments necessarily be rendered, which are urged by the advocates for certain amusements, on the ground of their *harmlessness*; if those amusements serve (not to mention any positive evil which may belong to them) in like manner to draw away the thoughts and affections from all spiritual objects!

To conclude; when this topic happens to become the subject of conversation, instead of addressing severe and pointed

attacks

attacks to young ladies on the ſin of attending places of diverſion, would it not be better firſt to endeavour to excite in them that principle of Chriſtianity, with which ſuch diverſions ſeem not quite compatible; as the phyſician, who viſits a patient in an eruptive fever, pays little attention to thoſe ſpots which to the ignorant appear to be the diſeaſe, except indeed ſo far as they ſerve as indications to let him into its nature, but goes ſtraight to the root of the malady? He attacks the fever, he lowers the pulſe, he changes the ſyſtem, he corrects the general habit; well knowing that if he can but reſtore the vital principle of health, the ſpots, which were nothing but ſymptoms, will die away of themſelves.

In inſtructing others, we ſhould imitate our Lord and his Apoſtles, and not always aim our blow at each particular corruption; but making it our buſineſs to convince our pupil that what brings forth the evil fruit ſhe exhibits, cannot be a branch

of

it muſt always, in ſome meaſure, be left to the diſcretion of the preacher, and to the conſcience of the hearer, to examine whether the life and habits of thoſe who profeſs it are conformable to its main ſpirit and deſign.

The ſame Divine Spirit which indited the Holy Scriptures, is promiſed to purify the hearts and renew the natures of repenting and believing Chriſtians; and the compoſitions it inſpired are in ſome degree analogous to the workmanſhip it effects. It prohibited the vicious practices of the apoſtolical days, by prohibiting the paſſions and principles which rendered them gratifying; and ſtill working in like manner on the hearts of real Chriſtians, it corrects the taſte which was accuſtomed to find its proper gratification in the reſorts of vanity; and thus effectually provides for the reformation of the habits, and infuſes a reliſh for rational and domeſtic enjoyments, and for whatever can adminiſter pleaſure to

that ſpirit of peace, and love, and hope, and joy, which animates and rules the renewed heart of the true Chriſtian.

But there is a portion of Scripture which, though to a ſuperficial reader it may ſeem but very remotely connected with the preſent ſubject, yet, to readers of another caſt, ſeems to ſettle the matter beyond controverſy. In the parable of the great ſupper, this important truth is held out to us, that even things *good in themſelves* may be the means of our eternal ruin, by drawing our hearts from God, and cauſing us to make light of the offers of the Goſpel. One invited gueſt had bought an eſtate, another had made a purchaſe, equally blameleſs, of oxen; a third had married a wife, an act not illaudable in itſelf. They had all different reaſons, none of which appeared to have any moral turpitude; but they all agreed in this, *to decline the invitation to the ſupper.* The worldly poſſeſſions of one, the worldly buſineſs of another, and what ſhould be par-

of the true vine; we ſhould thus avail ourſelves of individual corruptions, for impreſſing her with a ſenſe of the neceſſity of purifying the common ſource from which they flow—a corrupt nature. Thus making it our grand buſineſs to rectify the heart, we purſue the true, the compendious, the only method of producing univerſal holineſs.

I would, however, take leave of thoſe amiable and not ill-diſpoſed young perſons, who complain of the rigour of human prohibitions, and declare, "they meet "with no ſuch ſtrictneſs in the Goſpel," by aſking them, with the moſt affectionate earneſtneſs, if they can conſcientiouſly reconcile their nightly attendance at every public place which they frequent, with ſuch precepts as the following: "Redeem-"ing the time:"—"Watch and pray:"—"Watch, for ye know not at what time "your Lord cometh:"—"Abſtain from "all *appearance* of evil:—"Set your af-"fections on things above:"—"Be ye ſpirit-

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"ually minded:"—"Crucify the flesh with "its affections and lusts?" And I would venture to offer one criterion, by which the persons in question may be enabled to decide on the positive innocence and safety of such diversions; I mean, provided they are sincere in their scrutiny and honest in their avowal. If, on their return at night from those places, they find they can retire, and "commune with their "own hearts;" if they find the love of God operating with undiminished force on their minds; if they can "bring every "thought into subjection," and concentrate every wandering imagination; if they can soberly examine into their own state of mind:—I do not say if they can do all this perfectly and without distraction; (for who almost can do this at any time?) but if they can do it with the same *degree* of seriousness, pray with the same *degree* of fervour, and renounce the world in as great a *measure* as at other times; and if they can lie down with a peaceful con-

ſciouſneſs of having avoided in the evening, "that temptation" which they had prayed not to be "led into" in the morning, they may then more reaſonably hope that all is well, and that they are not ſpeaking falſe peace to their hearts.—Again, if we cannot beg the bleſſing of our Maker on whatever we are going to do or to enjoy, is it not an unequivocal proof that the thing ought not to be done or enjoyed? On all the rational enjoyments of ſociety, on all healthful and temperate exerciſe, on the delights of friendſhip, arts, and poliſhed letters, on the exquiſite pleaſures reſulting from the enjoyment of rural ſcenery, and the beauties of nature; on the innocent participation of theſe we may aſk the divine favour—for the ſober enjoyment of theſe we may thank the divine beneficence: but do we feel equally diſpoſed to invoke bleſſings or return praiſes for gratifications found, (to ſay no worſe,) in levity, in vanity, and waſte of time?—If theſe teſts were fairly uſed; if theſe experiments

were

were honeſtly tried; if theſe examinations were conſcientiouſly made, may we not, without offence, preſume to aſk—*Could* our numerous places of public reſort, *could* our ever-multiplying ſcenes of more ſelect but not leſs dangerous diverſion, nightly overflow with an exceſs hitherto unparallelled in the annals of pleaſure *?

* If I might preſume to recommend a book which of all others expoſes the inſignificance, vanity, littleneſs, and emptineſs of the world, I ſhould not heſitate to name Mr. Law's "*Serious Call to a devout and holy* "*Life.*" Few writers, except Paſcal, have directed ſo much acuteneſs of reaſoning and ſo much pointed wit to this object. He not only makes the reader afraid of a worldly life on account of its ſinfulneſs, but aſhamed of it on account of its folly. Few men perhaps have had a deeper inſight into the human heart, or have more ſkilfully probed its corruptions: yet on points of doctrine his views do not ſeem to be juſt; and his diſquiſitions are often unſound and fanciful, ſo that a *general* peruſal of his works would neither be profitable or intelligible. To a faſhionable woman immerſed in the vanities of life, or to a buſy man overwhelmed with its cares, I know no book ſo applicable, or likely to exhibit with equal force the vanity of the ſhadows they are purſuing. But, even in this work, Law is not a ſafe guide to evangelical light;

light; and, in many of his others, he is highly visionary and whimsical: and I have known some excellent persons who were first led by this admirable genius to see the wants of their own hearts, and the utter insufficiency of the world to fill up the craving void, who, though they became eminent for piety and self-denial, have had their usefulness abridged, and whose minds have contracted something of a monastic severity by an unqualified perusal of Mr. Law. True Christianity does not call on us to starve our bodies, but our corruptions. As the *mortified Apostle of the holy and self-denying Baptist*, preaching repentance because the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Mr. Law has no superior. As a preacher of salvation on scriptural grounds, I would follow other guides.

CHAP. XIX.

A worldly ſpirit incompatible with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

Is it not whimſical to hear ſuch complaints againſt the ſtrictneſs of religion as we are frequently hearing, from beings who are voluntarily purſuing, as has been ſhewn in the preceding Chapters, a courſe of life which faſhion makes infinitely more ſevere. How really burdenſome would Chriſtianity be if ſhe enjoined ſuch ſedulous application, ſuch unremitting labours, ſuch a ſucceſſion of fatigues! If religion commanded ſuch hardſhips and ſelf-denial, ſuch days of hurry, ſuch evenings of exertion, ſuch nights of broken reſt, ſuch perpetual ſacrifices of quiet, ſuch exile from family delights, as *Faſhion* impoſes, then indeed the ſervice of Chriſtianity would

would no longer merit its present appellation of being a "*reasonable* service;" then the name of perfect slavery might be justly applied to that which we are told in the beautiful language of our church, is "a service of perfect freedom:" a service, the great object of which is "to "deliver us from the bondage of cor-"ruption into the glorious liberty of the "children of God."

A worldly temper, by which I mean a disposition to prefer worldly pleasures, worldly satisfactions, and worldly advantages, to the immortal interests of the soul; and to let worldly considerations actuate us instead of the dictates of religion in the concerns of ordinary life; a worldly temper, I say, is not, like almost any other fault, the effect of passion or the consequence of surprise, when the heart is off its guard. It is not excited incidentally by the operation of external circumstances on the infirmity of nature; but it is the vital spirit, the essential soul, the living principle of

of evil. It is not ſo much an act, as a ſtate of being; not ſo much an occaſional complaint, as a tainted conſtitution of mind. If it does not always ſhow itſelf in extraordinary exceſſes, it has no perfect intermiſſion. Even when it is not immediately tempted to break out into overt and ſpecific acts, it is at work within, ſtirring up the heart to diſaffection againſt holineſs, and infuſing a kind of moral diſability to whatever is intrinſically right. It infects and depraves all the powers and faculties of the ſoul; for it operates on the underſtanding, by blinding it to whatever is ſpiritually good; on the will, by making it averſe from God; on the affections, by diſordering and ſenſualizing them; ſo that one may almoſt ſay to thoſe who are under the ſupreme dominion of this ſpirit, what was ſaid to the hoſts of Joſhua, "Ye *cannot* ſerve the Lord."

This worldlineſs of mind is not at all commonly underſtood, and for the following

reaſon :—People ſuppoſe that in this world our chief buſineſs is with the things of this world, and that to conduct the buſineſs of this world well, that is, conformably to moral principles, is the chief ſubſtance of moral and true goodneſs. Religion, if introduced at all into the ſyſtem, only makes its occaſional, and if I may ſo ſpeak, its holiday appearance. To bring religion into every thing, is thought incompatible with the due attention to the things of this life. And ſo it would be, if by religion were meant *talking* about religion. The phraſe, therefore, is: "We cannot always be praying; we "muſt mind our buſineſs and our ſocial "duties as well as our devotion." Worldly buſineſs being thus ſubjected to worldly, though in ſome degree moral, maxims, the mind during the conduct of buſineſs grows worldly; and a continually increaſing worldly ſpirit dims the ſight and relaxes the moral principle on which the affairs

affairs of the world are conducted, as well as indiſpoſes the mind for all the exerciſes of devotion.

But this temper, as far as relates to *buſi-neſs*, ſo much aſſumes the ſemblance of goodneſs, that thoſe who have not right views are apt to miſtake the carrying on the affairs of life on a tolerably moral principle, for religion. They do not ſee that the evil lies not in their ſo carrying on buſineſs, but in their not carrying on the things of this life in ſubſerviency to the things of eternity; in their not carrying them on with the unintermitting idea of reſponſibility. The evil does not lie in their not being always on their knees, but in their not bringing their religion from the cloſet into the world: in their not bringing the ſpirit of the Sunday's devotions into the tranſactions of the week: in not transforming their religion from a dry, and ſpeculative, and inoperative ſyſtem, into a lively, and influential, and unceaſing principle of action.

Though there are, bleſſed be God! in the moſt exalted ſtations, women who adorn their Chriſtian profeſſion by a conſiſtent conduct; yet are there not others who are labouring hard to unite the irreconcileable intereſts of earth and heaven? who, while they will not relinquiſh one jot of what *this* world has to beſtow, yet by no means renounce their hopes of a better? who do not think it unreaſonable that their indulging in the fulleſt poſſeſſion of preſent pleaſures ſhould interfere with the moſt certain reverſion of future glory? who, after living in the moſt unbounded gratification of eaſe, vanity, and luxury, fancy that heaven muſt be attached of courſe to a life of which Chriſtianity is the outward profeſſion, and which has not been ſtained by any flagrant or diſhonourable act of guilt?

Are there not many who, while they entertain a reſpect for religion, (for I addreſs not the unbelieving or the licentious,) while they believe its truths, obſerve its forms,

forms, and would be ſhocked not to be thought religious, are yet immerſed in this life of diſqualifying worldlineſs? who, though they make a conſcience of going to the public worſhip once on a Sunday, and are ſcrupulouſly obſervant of the other rites of the Church, yet heſitate not to give up all the reſt of their time to the very ſame purſuits and pleaſures which occupy the hearts and engroſs the lives of thoſe looſer characters whoſe enjoyment is not obſtructed by any dread of a future account? and who are acting on the wiſe principle of "the children of this world," in making the moſt of the preſent ſtate of being from the conviction that there is no other to be expected?

It muſt be owned, indeed, that faith in unſeen things is at times lamentably weak and defective even in the truly pious; and that it is ſo, is the ſubject of their grief and humiliation. O! how does the real Chriſtian take ſhame in the coldneſs of his belief, in the lowneſs of his attainments!

How

How deeply does he lament that "when "he would do good, evil is present with "him!"—"that the life he now lives in the flesh, is" not, in the degree it ought to be, "by faith in the Son of God!" Yet one thing is clear; however weak his belief may seem to be, it is evident that his actions are principally governed by it; he evinces his sincerity to others by a life in some good degree analogous to the doctrines he professes: while to himself he has at least this conviction, that faint as his confidence may be at times, low as may be his hope, and feeble as his faith may seem, yet at the worst of times he would not exchange that faint measure of trust and hope for all the actual pleasures and possessions of his most splendid acquaintance; and what is a proof of his sincerity he never seeks the cure of his dejection, where they seek theirs, in the world, but in God.

But as to the faith of worldly persons, however strong it may be in speculation, however

however orthodox their creed, however ſtout their profeſſion, we cannot help fearing that it is a little defective in ſincerity: for if there were in their minds a full perſuaſion of the truth of revelation, and of the eternal bliſs it promiſes, would it not be obvious to them that there muſt be more diligence for its attainment? We diſcover great ardour in carrying on worldly projects, becauſe we believe the good which we are purſuing is real, and will reward the trouble of the purſuit; we believe *that* good is to be attained by diligence, and we prudently proportion our earneſtneſs to this conviction; when therefore we ſee perſons profeſſing a lively faith in a better world, yet labouring little to obtain an intereſt in it, can we forbear ſuſpecting that their belief, not only of their own title to eternal happineſs, but of eternal happineſs itſelf, is not well grounded; and that, if they were to "examine themſelves truly," and to produce the principle of ſuch a relaxed morality, the faith would be found

found to be much of a piece with the practice?

The objections which disincline the world to make present sacrifices of pleasure, with a view to obtaining eternal happiness, are such as apply to all the ordinary concerns of life. That is, men object chiefly to a religious course as tending to rob them of that actual pleasure which is within their reach, for the sake of a remote enjoyment. They object to giving up the seen good for the unseen. But do not almost all the the transactions of life come under the same description? Do we not give up present ease, and renounce much indulgence in order to acquire a future? Do we not part with our current money for the reversion of an estate, which we know it will be a long time before we can possess? Nay, do not the most worldly often submit to an immediate inconvenience, by reducing their present income, in order to insure to themselves a larger capital for their future subsistence?

Now,

Now, "Faith, which is the ſubſtance "of things hoped for," is meant to furniſh the ſoul with preſent ſupport, while it ſatisfies it as to the ſecurity on which it has lent itſelf; juſt as a man's bonds and mortgages aſſure him that he is really rich, though he has not all the money in hand ready to ſpend at the moment. Thoſe who truly believe the bible, muſt in the ſame manner be content to live on its promiſes, by which God has as it were pledged himſelf for their future bleſſedneſs.

Even that very ſpirit of enjoyment which leads the perſons in queſtion ſo ſtudiouſly to poſſeſs themſelves of the qualifications neceſſary for the pleaſures of the preſent ſcene; that underſtanding and good ſenſe, which leads them to acquire ſuch talents as may enable them to reliſh the reſorts of gaiety here; that very ſpirit ſhould induce thoſe who are really looking for a future ſtate of happineſs, to wiſh to acquire ſomething of the taſte, and temper, and talents, which may be conſidered as

qualifications for the enjoyment of that happineſs. The neglect of doing this muſt proceed from one of theſe two cauſes; either they muſt think their preſent courſe a ſafe and proper courſe; or they muſt think that death is to produce ſome ſudden and ſurpriſing alteration in the human character. But the office of death is to tranſport us to a new ſtate, not to transform us to a new nature; the ſtroke of death is intended to effect our deliverance out of this world, and our introduction into another; but it is not likely to effect any ſudden and wonderful, much leſs a total change in our hearts or our taſtes: ſo far from this, that we are aſſured in Scripture, "that he that is filthy will be "filthy ſtill, and he that his holy will be "holy ſtill." Though we believe that death will completely cleanſe the holy ſoul from its remaining pollutions, that it will exchange defective ſanctification into perfect purity, entangling temptation into complete freedom; ſuffering and affliction into

into health and joy; doubts and fears into perfect ſecurity, and oppreſſive wearineſs into everlaſting reſt; yet there is no magic in the wand of death which will convert an unholy ſoul into a holy one. And it is awful to reflect, that ſuch tempers as have the allowed predominance here will maintain it for ever; that ſuch as the will is when we cloſe our eyes upon the things of time, ſuch it will be when we open them on thoſe of eternity. The mere act of death no more fits us for heaven, than the mere act of the maſon who pulls down our old houſe fits us for a new one. If we die with our hearts running over with the love of the world, there is no promiſe to lead us to expect that we ſhall riſe with them full of the love of God. Death indeed will ſhew us to ourſelves ſuch as we are, but will not make us ſuch as we are not: and it will be too late to be acquiring ſelf-knowledge when we can no longer turn it to any account but that of tormenting ourſelves. To illuſtrate this truth ſtill farther

farther by an allufion familiar to the perfons I addrefs: the drawing up the curtain at the theatre, though it ferve to introduce us to the entertainments behind it, does not create in us any new faculties to underftand or to relifh thofe entertainments: thefe muft have been already acquired; they muft have been provided beforehand, and brought with us to the place, if we would relifh the pleafures of the place; for the entertainment can only operate on that tafte we carry to it. It is too late to be acquiring when we ought to be enjoying.

That fpirit of prayer and praife, thofe difpofitions of love, meeknefs, " peace, " quietnefs, and affurance;" that indifference to the fafhion of a world which is paffing away; that longing after deliverance from fin, that defire of holinefs, together with all " the fruits of the fpirit" here, muft furely make fome part of our qualification for the enjoyment of a world, the pleafures of which are all fpiritual.

And

And who can conceive any thing comparable to the awful ſurpriſe of a ſoul long immerſed in the indulgences of vanity and pleaſure, yet all the while lulled by the ſelf-complacency of a religion of mere forms; who, while it counted upon heaven as a thing of courſe, had made no preparation for it! Who can conceive any ſurpriſe comparable to that of ſuch a ſoul on ſhutting its eyes on a world of ſenſe, of which all the objects and delights were ſo congenial to its nature, and opening them on a world of ſpirits of which all the characters of enjoyment are of a nature new, unknown, ſurpriſing, and ſpecifically different? pleaſures more inconceivable to its apprehenſion and more unſuitable to its taſte, than the gratifications of one ſenſe are to the organs of another, or than the moſt exquiſite works of art and genius to abſolute imbecility of mind.

While we would with deep humility confeſs that we cannot purchaſe heaven by any works or right diſpoſitions of

 our

our own; while we gratefully acknowledge that it muſt be purchaſed for us by "Him who loved us, and waſhed "us from our ſins in his blood;" yet let us remember that we have no reaſon to expect we could be capable of enjoying the pleaſures of a heaven ſo purchaſed without heavenly mindedneſs.

When thoſe perſons who are apt to expect as much comfort from religion as if their hearts were not full of the world, now and then, in a fit of honeſty or low ſpirits, complain that Chriſtianity does not make them as good and as happy as they were led to expect from that aſſurance, that "great peace have they who love the "law of God," and that "they who "wait on him ſhall want no manner of "thing that is good;" when they lament that the paths of religion are not thoſe "paths of pleaſantneſs" which they were led to expect; their caſe reminds one of a celebrated phyſician, who uſed to ſay, that the reaſon why his preſcriptions, which com-

commonly cured the poor and the temperate, did ſo little good among his rich luxurious patients, was, that while he was labouring to remove the diſeaſe by medicines, of which they only took drams, grains, and ſcruples; they were inflaming it by a multiplicity of injurious aliments, which they ſwallowed by ounces, pounds, and pints.

Theſe faſhionable Chriſtians ſhould be reminded, that there was no half engagement made for them at their baptiſm; that they are not partly their own and partly their Redeemer's. He that is "bought "with a price," is the ſole property of the purchaſer. Faith does not conſiſt merely in ſubmitting the opinions of the underſtanding, but the diſpoſitions of the heart: religion is not a ſacrifice of ſentiments, but of affections: it is not the tribute of fear extorted from a ſlave, but the voluntary homage of love paid by a child.

Neither does a Chriſtian's piety conſiſt in living in retreat, and railing at the practices of the world, while, perhaps, her heart is full of the ſpirit of that world at which ſhe is railing: but it conſiſts in *ſubduing* the ſpirit of the world, reſiſting its temptations, and oppoſing its practices, even while her duty obliges her to live in it.

Nor is the ſpirit or the love of the world confined to thoſe only who are making a figure in it; nor are its operations bounded by the precincts of the metropolis, nor by the limited regions of firſt-rate rank and ſplendor. She who inveighs againſt the luxury and exceſſes of London, and ſolaces herſelf in her own comparative ſobriety, becauſe her more circumſcribed fortune compels her to take up with the ſecond hand pleaſures of ſucceſſive watering-places, if ſhe purſue theſe pleaſures with avidity, is governed by the ſame ſpirit: and ſhe whoſe ſtill nar-

rower opportunities ſtint her to the petty diverſions of her provincial town, if ſhe be buſied in ſwelling and enlarging her ſmaller ſphere of vanity and idleneſs, however ſhe may comfort herſelf with her own comparative goodneſs, by railing at the unattainable pleaſures of the watering-place, or the ſtill more unapproachable joys of the capital, is governed by the ſame ſpirit: for ſhe who is as vain, as diſſipated, and as extravagant as actual circumſtances admit, would be as vain, as diſſipated, and as extravagant as the gayeſt objects of her invective actually are, if ſhe could change places with them. It is not merely by what we do that we can be ſure the ſpirit of the world has no dominion over us, but by fairly conſidering what we ſhould probably do if more were in our power.

The worldly Chriſtian, if I may be allowed ſuch a palpable contradiction in terms, muſt not imagine that ſhe acquits herſelf of her religious obligations by pay-

ing in her mere weekly oblation of prayer. There is no covenant by which communion with God is reſtricted to an hour or two on the Sunday: ſhe much not imagine ſhe acquits herſelf by ſetting apart a few particular days in the year for the exerciſe of a periodical devotion, and then flying back to the world as eagerly as if ſhe were reſolved to repay herſelf with large intereſt for her ſhort fit of ſelf-denial; the ſtream of pleaſure running with a more rapid current, from having been interrupted by this forced obſtruction. And the avidity with which we have ſeen certain perſons of a ſtill leſs correct character than the claſs we have been conſidering, return to a whole year's carnival, after the ſelf-impoſed penance of a Paſſion week, gives a ſhrewd intimation that they conſidered the temporary abſtraction leſs as an act of penitence for the paſt, than as a purchaſe of indemnity for the future. Such bareweight proteſtants prudently condition for retaining the Popiſh doctrine of indul-

gences,

gences, which they buy, not indeed of the late ſpiritual court of Rome, but of that ſecret, ſelf-acquitting judge, which ignorance of its own turpitude, and of the ſtrict requirements of the divine law, has eſtabliſhed ſupreme in the tribunal of every unrenewed heart.

But the practice of ſelf-examination is impeded by one clog, which renders it peculiarly inconvenient to the gay and worldly: for the royal prophet (who was, however, himſelf as likely as any one to be acquainted with the difficulties peculiar to greatneſs) has annexed as a concomitant to "communing with our "own heart," that we ſhould "*be ſtill.*" Now this clauſe of the injunction annihilates the other, by rendering it incompatible with the preſent habits of faſhionable life, of which *ſtillneſs* is clearly not one of the conſtituents. It would, however, greatly aſſiſt thoſe who do not altogether decline the practice, if they were to eſtabliſh into a rule the habit of detecting cer-

tain

tain ſuſpicious practices, by realizing them, as it were, to their own minds, through the means of drawing them out in detail, and of placing them before their eyes cloathed in language; for there is nothing that ſo effectually expoſes an abſurdity which has hitherto paſſed muſter for want of ſuch an inquiſition, as giving it ſhape, and form, and body. How many things which now ſilently work themſelves into the habit, and paſs current without inquiry, would then ſhock us by their palpable inconſiſtency! Who, for inſtance, could ſtand the ſight of ſuch a debtor and creditor account as this:—*Item*; So many card-parties, balls, and operas due to me in the following year, for ſo many manuals, prayers, and meditations paid beforehand during the laſt ſix days in Lent? With how much indignation ſoever this ſuggeſtion may be treated; whatever offence may be taken at ſuch a combination of the ſerious and the ludicrous; however we may revolt at the idea of ſuch a compo-

ſition

ſition with our Maker, when put into ſo many words; does not the habitual courſe of ſome go near to realiſe ſuch a ſtatement?

But "a Chriſtian's *race*," as a venerable Prelate* obſerves, "is not run at ſo many "*heats*," but is a conſtant courſe, a regular progreſs by which we are continually gaining ground upon ſin, and approaching nearer to the kingdom of God.

Am I then ridiculing this pious ſecluſion of contrite ſinners? Am I then jeſting at that "troubled ſpirit" which God has declared is his "acceptable "ſacrifice?" God forbid! Such reaſonable retirements have been the practice, and continue to be the comfort of ſome of the ſincereſt Chriſtians; and *will* continue to be reſorted to as long as Chriſtianity, that is, as long as the world, ſhall laſt. It is well to call off the thoughts, even for a ſhort time, not only from ſin and vanity,

* Biſhop Hopkins.

but

but even from the lawful purſuits of buſineſs and the laudable concerns of life; and, at times, to annihilate, as it were, the ſpace which divides us from eternity:

'Tis greatly wiſe to talk with our paſt hours,
And aſk them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.

Yet as to thoſe who ſeek a ſhort annual retreat as a mere form; who dignify with the idea of a religious retirement a week in which it is rather unfaſhionable to be ſeen in town; who retire with an unabated reſolution to return to the maxims, the pleaſures, and the ſpirit of that world which they do but mechanically renounce; is it not to be feared that this ſhort ſeceſſion, which does not even pretend to ſubdue the principle, but merely ſuſpends the act, may only ſerve to ſet a keener edge on the appetite for the pleaſures they are quitting? Is it not to be feared that the bow may fly back with redoubled violence from having been unnaturally bent? that

that by varniſhing over a life of vanity with the tranſient externals of a formal and temporary piety, they may the more dangerouſly ſkin over the troubleſome ſoreneſs of a tender conſcience, by laying

This flattering unction to the ſoul?

And is it not awfully to be apprehended that ſuch devotions come in among thoſe vain oblations which the Almighty has declared he will not accept? For, is it not among the deluſions of a worldly piety, to conſider Chriſtianity as a thing which cannot, indeed, ſafely be omitted, but which is to *be got over*; a certain quantity of which is, as it were, to be taken in the lump, with long intervals between the repetitions? Is it not among its deluſions to conſider religion as impoſing a ſet of hardſhips, which *muſt* be occaſionally encountered in order to procure a peaceable enjoyment of the long reſpite?—a ſhort penalty for a long pleaſure? that theſe

ſevere

ſevere conditions thus fulfilled, the acquitted Chriſtian having paid the annual demand of a rigorous requiſition, ſhe may now lawfully return to her natural ſtate; the old reckoning being adjuſted, ſhe may begin a new ſcore, and receive the reward of her punctual obedience, in the reſumed indulgence of thoſe gratifications which ſhe had for a ſhort time laid aſide as a hard taſk to pleaſe a hard maſter: but this taſk performed, and the maſter appeaſed, the mind may diſcover its natural bent, in joyfully returning to the objects of its real choice? Whereas, is it not clear on the other hand, that if the religious exerciſes had produced the effect which it is the nature of true religion to produce, the penitent *could* not return with her old genuine alacrity to thoſe habits of the world, from which the pious weekly manuals through which ſhe has been labouring with the punctuality of an almanac as to the day, and the accuracy of a bead-roll

as to the number, were intended by the devout authors to reſcue their reader?

I am far from inſinuating, that this literal ſequeſtration ought to be prolonged throughout the year, or that all the days of buſineſs are to be made equally days of ſolemnity and continued meditation. This earth is a place in which a much larger portion of a common Chriſtian's time muſt be aſſigned to action than to contemplation. Women of the higher claſs were not ſent into the world to ſhun ſociety, but to improve it. They were not deſigned for the cold and viſionary virtues of ſolitudes and monaſteries, but for the amiable, and endearing, and uſeful offices of ſocial life: they are of a religion which does not impoſe idle auſterities, but enjoins active duties; a religion which demands the moſt benevolent actions and which requires them to be ſanctified by the pureſt motives; a religion which does not condemn its followers to the comparatively eaſy taſk of ſecluſion *from* the world, but aſſigns them the

the more difficult province of living uncorrupted *in it;* a religion which, while it forbids them "to follow a multitude to do *evil,*" includes in that prohibition the ſin of doing *nothing*, and which moreover enjoins them to be followers of him "who "went about doing *good.*"

But may we not reaſonably contend, that though the ſame ſequeſtration is not required, yet that the ſame *ſpirit* and *temper* which we would hope is thought neceſſary even by thoſe on whom we are animadverting, during the occaſional humiliation, muſt, by every real Chriſtian, be extended throughout all the periods of the year? And when that is really the caſe, when once the ſpirit of religion ſhall indeed govern the heart, it will not only animate her religious actions and employments, but will gradually extend itſelf to the chaſtiſing her converſation, will diſcipline her thoughts, influence her common buſineſs, reſtrain her indulgencies, and ſanctify her very pleaſures.

But it ſeems that many, who entertain a *general* notion of Chriſtian duty, do not conſider it as of univerſal and unremitting obligation, but rather as a duty binding at times on all, and at all times on ſome. To the attention of ſuch we would recommend that very explicit addreſs of our Lord on the ſubject of ſelf-denial, the temper directly oppoſed to a worldly ſpirit: "And he ſaid unto them "ALL, if any man will come after me, "let him deny himſelf, and take up his "croſs DAILY." Thoſe who think ſelf-denial not of *univerſal* obligation, will obſerve the word *all*, and thoſe who think the obligation not *conſtant* will attend to the term *daily*. Theſe two little words cut up by the root all the occaſional religious obſervances grafted on a worldly life; all tranſient, periodical, and temporary acts of piety, which ſome ſeem willing to commute for a life of habitual thoughtleſneſs and vanity.

 There

There is indeed ſcarcely a more pitiable being than one who, inſtead of making her religion the informing principle of all ſhe does, has only juſt enough to keep her in continual fear; who drudges through her ſtinted exerciſes with a ſuperſtitious kind of terror, while her general life ſhows that the love of holineſs is not the governing principle in her heart; who ſeems to ſuffer all the pains and penalties of Chriſtianity, but is a ſtranger to "that "liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us "free." Let it not be thought a ludicrous invention, if the author hazard the producing a real illuſtration of theſe remarks, in the inſtance of a lady of this ſtamp, who returning from church on a very cold day, and remarking with a good deal of ſelf-complacency how much ſhe had ſuffered in the performance of her duty, comforted herſelf with emphatically adding, "that ſhe hoped however it would "*anſwer*."

There

There is this ſtriking difference between the real and the worldly Chriſtian, the latter does not complain of the ſtrictneſs of the divine law, but of the deficiencies of his own performance; while the worldly Chriſtian is little troubled at his own failures, but deplores the ſtrictneſs of the divine requiſitions. The one wiſhes that God would expect leſs, the other prays for ſtrength to do more. When the worldly perſon hears real Chriſtians ſpeak of their own low ſtate, and acknowledge their extreme unworthineſs; he really believes them to be worſe than thoſe who make no ſuch humiliating confeſſions. He does not know that a mind which is at once deeply convinced of its own corruptions, and of the purity of the divine law, is ſo keenly alive to the perception of all ſin as to be humbled by the commiſſion of ſuch as is comparatively ſmall, and which theſe who have leſs correct views of Goſpel truth hardly allow to be ſin at all.

Such

Such an one with Job, ſays, "Now mine "eye *ſeeth* Thee."

But there is no permanent comfort in any religion, ſhort of that by which the diligent Chriſtian ſtrives that all his actions ſhall have the love of God for their motive, and the glory of God, as well as his own ſalvation, for their end; while to go about to balance our good and bad actions one againſt the other, and to take comfort in the occaſional predominance of the former, while the cultivation of the principle from which they ſhould ſpring is neglected, is not the road to all thoſe peaceful fruits of the ſpirit to which true Chriſtianity conducts the humble and penitent believer. For, after all we can do, Chriſtian tempers and a Chriſtian ſpirit are the true criterion of a Chriſtian character, and ſerve to furniſh the moſt unequivocal teſt of our attainments in religion. Our doctrines may be ſound, but they may not be influential; our actions may

be

be correct, but they may want the sancti-fying principle; our frames and feelings may *seem*, nay they may *be* devout, but they may be heightened by mere animal fervour; even if genuine they are seldom lasting; and to many pious persons they are not given: it is therefore the Christian tempers which most infallibly indicate the sincere Christian, and best prepare him for the heavenly state.

I am aware that a better cast of characters than those we have been contemplating; that even the amiable and the well-disposed, who, while they want courage to resist what they have too much principle to think right, and too much sense to justify, will yet plead for the *palliating* system, and accuse these remarks of unnecessary rigour. They will declare "that "really they are as religious as they can "be; they wish they were better; they "have little satisfaction in the life they are "leading, yet they cannot break with the "world; they cannot fly in the face of "custom;

"custom; it does not become individuals "like them to oppose the torrent of "fashion." Beings so interesting, abounding with engaging qualities; who not only feel the beauty of goodness, but reverence the truths of Christianity, and are awfully looking for a general judgment, we are grieved to hear lament "that they only do "as others do," when they are perhaps themselves of such rank and importance that if they would begin to do right, others would be brought to do as they did. We are grieved to hear them indolently assert, that "they wish it were otherwise," when they possess the power to *make* it otherwise, by setting an example which they know would be followed. We are sorry to hear them content themselves with declaring, that "they have not the courage to be "singular," when they must feel, by seeing the influence of their example in worse things, that there would be no such great singularity in piety itself, if once *they* became sincerely pious. Besides, this

diffidence

diffidence does not break out on other occasions. They do not blush to be quoted as the oppofers of an old mode or the inventors of a new one: nor are they equally backward in being the firft to appear in a ftrange fafhion, fuch an one as often excites wonder, and fometimes even offends againft delicacy. Let not then diffidence be pleaded as an excufe only on occafions wherein courage would be virtue.

Will it be thought too harfh a queftion if we venture to afk thefe gentle characters who are thus entrenching themfelves in the imaginary fafety of furrounding multitudes, and who fay "We only do as others do," whether they are willing to run the tremendous rifk of confequences, and *to fare as others fare?*

But while thefe plead the authority of Fafhion as a fufficient reafon for their conformity to the world, one who has fpoken with a paramount authority has pofitively faid, "Be ye *not* conformed to the world."

 Nay,

Nay, it is urged as the very badge and diſtinction by which the character oppoſite to the Chriſtian is to be marked, "that "the friendſhip of the world is *enmity* "with God."

Temptation to conform to the world was never perhaps more irreſiſtible than in the days which immediately preceded the Deluge: and no man could ever have pleaded the *faſhion* in order to juſtify a criminal aſſimilation with the reigning manners, with more propriety than the Patriarch Noah. He had the two grand and contending objects of terror to encounter which we have; the fear of ridicule, and the fear of deſtruction; the dread of ſin, and the dread of ſingularity. Our cauſe of alarm is at leaſt equally preſſing with his; for it does not appear, even while he was actually obeying the Divine command in providing the means of his future ſafety, that he *ſaw* any actual ſymptoms of the impending ruin. So that in one ſenſe *he* might have truly pleaded

as

as an excuſe for ſlackneſs of preparation, "that all things continued as they were "from the beginning;" while many of us, though the ſtorm is actually begun, never think of providing the refuge: it is true he was "warned of God," and he provided "by faith." But are not we alſo warned of God? have we not had a fuller revelation? have we not ſeen Scripture illuſtrated, prophecy fulfilling, with every awful circumſtance that can either quicken the moſt ſluggiſh remiſneſs, or confirm the feebleſt faith?

Beſides, the Patriarch's plea for following the faſhion was ſtronger than you can produce. While you muſt ſee that many are going wrong, he ſaw that none were going right. "All fleſh had corrupted "his way before God;" whilſt, bleſſed be God! you have ſtill inſtances enough of piety to keep you in countenance. While you lament that *the world* ſeduces you, (for every one has a little world of his own,) your world perhaps is only a petty neighbour-

neighbourhood, a few ſtreets and ſquares; but the Patriarch had really the contagion of a whole united world to reſiſt; he had literally the example of the whole face of the earth to oppoſe. The "fear of man" alſo would then have been a more pardonable fault, when the lives of the ſame individuals who were likely to excite reſpect or fear was prolonged many ages, than it can be in the ſhort period now aſſigned to human life. How lamentable then that human opinion ſhould operate ſo powerfully, when it is but the breath of a being ſo frail and ſo ſhort-lived,

> That he doth ceaſe to be,
> Ere one can ſay he is!

You who find it ſo difficult to withſtand the individual allurement of one modiſh acquaintance, would, if you had been in the Patriarch's caſe, have concluded the ſtruggle to be quite ineffectual, and ſunk under the ſuppoſed fruitleſneſs of reſiſtance. "Myſelf," would you not have ſaid? "or

"at moſt my little family of eight perſons "can never hope to ſtop this torrent of "corruption; I lament the fruitleſneſs "of oppoſition; I deplore the neceſſity of "conformity with the prevailing ſyſtem: "but it would be a fooliſh preſumption "to hope that *one* family can effect a "change in the ſtate of the world." In your own caſe, however, it is not certain to how wide an extent the hearty union of even fewer perſons in ſuch a cauſe might reach: at leaſt is it nothing to do what the Patriarch did? was it nothing to preſerve himſelf from the general deſtruction; was it nothing to deliver his own ſoul? was it nothing to reſcue the ſouls of his whole family?

A wiſe man will never differ from the world in trifles. It is certainly a mark of a ſound judgment to comply with cuſtom whenever we ſafely can; ſuch compliance ſtrengthens our influence by reſerving to ourſelves the greater weight of authority on thoſe occaſions, when our conſcience obliges

obliges us to differ. Thofe who are prudent will cheerfully conform to all the innocent ufages of the world; but thofe who are Chriftians will be fcrupulous in defining which are really innocent previous to their conformity to them. Not what the world, but what the Gofpel calls innocent will be found at the grand fcrutiny to have been really fo. A difcreet Chriftian will take due pains to be convinced he is right before he will prefume to be fingular: but from the inftant he is perfuaded that the Gofpel is true, and the world of courfe wrong, he will no longer rifk his fafety by following multitudes, or hazard his foul by ftaking it on human opinion. All our moft dangerous miftakes arife from our not conftantly referring our practice to the ftandard of Scripture, inftead of the mutable ftandard of human eftimation by which it is impoffible to fix the real value of characters. For this latter ftandard in fome cafes determines thofe to be good who do not run all the lengths in which the

the notoriously bad allow themselves. The Gospel has an universal, the world has a local standard of goodness: in certain societies certain vices alone are dishonourable, such as covetousness and cowardice; while those sins of which our Saviour has said, that they which commit them "shall not inherit the kingdom of "God," detract nothing from the respect some persons receive. Nay, those very characters whom the Almighty has expressly and awfully declared "He will "judge *," are received, are admired, are caressed, in that which calls itself the best company.

But to weigh our actions by one standard now, when we know they will be judged by another hereafter, would be reckoned the height of absurdity in any transactions but those which involve the interests of eternity. "How readest

* Hebrews, xiii. 4.

"thou?" is a more ſpecific direction than any comparative view of our own habits with the habits of others: and at the final bar it will be of little avail that our actions have riſen above thoſe of bad men, if our views and principles ſhall be found to have been in oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Nor is *their* practice more commendable, who are ever on the watch to pick out the worſt actions of good men, by way of juſtifying their own conduct on the compariſon. The faults of the beſt men, "for there is not a juſt man upon earth "who ſinneth not," can in no wiſe juſtify the errors of the worſt: and it is not, invariably, the example of even good men that we muſt take for our unerring rule of conduct: nor is it by a ſingle action that either they or we ſhall be judged; for in that caſe who could be ſaved? but it is by the general prevalence of right principles and good habits, and Chriſtian

Chriſtian tempers; by the predominance of holineſs, and righteouſneſs, and temperance in the life, and by the power of humility, faith, and love in the heart.

CHAP. XX.

On the leading doctrines of Christianity.—The corruption of human nature.—The doctrine of redemption.—The necessity of a change of heart, and of the divine influences to produce that change.—With a sketch of the Christian character.

THE author having in this little work taken a view of the false notions often imbibed in early life from a bad education, and of their pernicious effects; and having attempted to point out the respective remedies to these; she would now draw all that has been said to a point, and declare plainly what she humbly conceives to be the source whence all these false notions and this wrong conduct really proceed: the prophet Jeremiah shall answer: "It "is because they have forsaken the foun-"tain of living waters, and have hewn "out

"out to themſelves ciſterns, broken ciſ- "terns that can hold no water." It is an ignorance paſt belief of what true Chriſtianity really is: the remedy, therefore, and the only remedy that can be applied with any proſpect of ſucceſs, is RELIGION, and by Religion ſhe would be underſtood to mean the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.

It has been before hinted, that Religion ſhould be taught at an early period of life; that children ſhould be *brought up* "in the nurture and admonition of the "Lord." The *manner* in which they ſhould be taught has likewiſe with great plainneſs been ſuggeſted; that it ſhould be done in ſo lively and familiar a manner as to make Religion amiable, and her ways to appear, what they really are, "ways of pleaſantneſs." And a ſlight ſketch has been given of the genius of Chriſtianity, by which her amiableneſs would more clearly appear. But this, being a ſubject of ſuch vaſt importance,

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compared with which every other ſubject ſinks into nothing; it ſeems not ſufficient to ſpeak on the doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity in *detached* parts, but it is of importance to point out, though in a brief and imperfect manner, the mutual dependance of one doctrine upon another, and the influence which theſe doctrines have upon the heart and life, ſo that the *duties* of Chriſtianity may be ſeen to grow out of its *doctrines*: by which it will appear that Chriſtian virtue differs *eſſentially* from Pagan: it is of a quite different kind: the plant itſelf is different, it comes from a different root, and grows in a different ſoil.

It will be ſeen how the humbling doctrine of the corruption of human nature, which has followed from the corruption of our firſt parents, makes way for the bright diſplay of redeeming love. How from the abaſing thought that "we are "all as ſheep going aſtray, every one in "his own way:" that none *can* return

to

to the ſhepherd of our ſouls, " except the " Father draw him :" that " the natural " man *cannot* receive the things of the " ſpirit, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſ- " cerned :" how from this humiliating view of the *helpleſsneſs*, as well as the *corruption* of human nature, we are to turn to that animating doctrine, the offer of *divine aſſiſtance.* So that, though human nature will appear from this view in a deeply degraded ſtate, and conſequently *all* have cauſe for humility, yet not one has cauſe for deſpair: the diſeaſe indeed is dreadful, but a phyſician is at hand, both able and willing to ſave us: though we are naturally without " ſtrength, our help is " laid upon one that is mighty." If the Goſpel diſcover to us our lapſed ſtate, it diſcovers alſo the means of our reſtoration to the divine image and favour. It not only diſcovers but impreſſes this image; it not only gives us the deſcription, but the attainment of this favour; and while the

word of God ſuggeſts the remedy, his ſpirit applies it.

We ſhould obſerve then, that the doctrines of our Saviour are, if I may ſo ſpeak, with a beautiful conſiſtency, all woven into one piece. We ſhould get ſuch a view of their reciprocal dependence as to be perſuaded that without a deep ſenſe of our own corruptions we can never ſeriouſly believe in a Saviour, becauſe the ſubſtantial and acceptable belief in Him muſt always ariſe from the conviction of our want of Him; that without a firm perſuaſion that the Holy Spirit can alone reſtore our fallen nature, repair the ruins of ſin, and renew the image of God upon the heart, we never ſhall be brought to ſerious humble prayer for repentance and reſtoration; and that, without this repentance, there is no ſalvation: for though Chriſt has died for us, and conſequently to him alone we muſt look as a Saviour, yet he has himſelf declared that he will ſave none but true penitents.

ON

ON THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN CORRUPTION.

To come now to a more particular ſtatement of theſe doctrines. When an important edifice is about to be erected, a wiſe builder will dig deep, and look well to the foundations, knowing that without this the fabric will not be likely to ſtand. The foundation of the Chriſtian religion, out of which the whole ſtructure may be ſaid to ariſe, appears to be the doctrine of the fall of man from his original ſtate of righteouſneſs; and the corruption and helpleſneſs of human nature, which are the conſequences of this fall, and which is the natural ſtate of every one born into the world. To this doctrine it is important to conciliate the minds, more eſpecially of young perſons, who are peculiarly diſpoſed to turn away from it as a moroſe, unamiable, and gloomy idea. They are apt to accuſe thoſe who are more ſtrict and ſerious, of unneceſſary ſeverity, and to

ſuſpect them of thinking unjuſtly ill of mankind. Some of the reaſons which prejudice the inexperienced againſt the doctrine in queſtion appear to be the following.

Young perſons themſelves have ſeen little of the world. In pleaſurable ſociety the world puts on its moſt amiable appearance; and that ſoftneſs and urbanity which prevail, particularly amongſt perſons of faſhion, are liable to be miſtaken for more than they are really worth. The oppoſition to this doctrine in the young, ariſes partly from ingenuouſneſs of heart, partly from a habit of indulging themſelves in favourable ſuppoſitions reſpecting the world, rather than of purſuing truth, which is always the grand thing to be purſued; and partly from the popularity of the tenet, *that every body is ſo wonderfully good!*

This error in youth has however a ſtill deeper foundation, which is their not having a right ſtandard of moral good and evil themſelves, in conſequence of their already

partaking of the very corruption which is ſpoken of, and which, in perverting the will, darkens the underſtanding alſo; they are therefore apt to have no very ſtrict ſenſe of duty, or of the neceſſity of a right and religious motive to every act.

Moreover, young people uſually do not know themſelves. Not having yet been much expoſed to temptation, owing to the prudent reſtraints in which they have been kept, they little ſuſpect to what lengths in vice they themſelves are liable to be tranſported, nor how far others actually are carried who are ſet free from thoſe reſtraints.

Having laid down theſe as ſome of the cauſes of error on this point, I proceed to obſerve on what ſtrong grounds the doctrine itſelf ſtands.

Profane hiſtory abundantly confirms this truth: the hiſtory of the world being in fact little elſe than the hiſtory of the crimes of the human race. Even though the annals of remote ages lie ſo involved in ob-

ſcurity, that ſome degree of uncertainty attaches itſelf to many of the events recorded, yet this one melancholy truth is always clear, that moſt of the miſeries which have been brought upon mankind, have proceeded from this general depravity.

The world we now live in furniſhes abundant proof of this truth. In a world formed on the deceitful theory of thoſe who aſſert the innocence and dignity of man, almoſt all the profeſſions, ſince they would have been rendered uſeleſs by ſuch a ſtate of innocence, would not have exiſted. Without ſin we may nearly preſume there would have been no ſickneſs; ſo that every medical profeſſor is a ſtanding evidence of this ſad truth. Sin not only brought ſickneſs but death into the world; conſequently every funeral preſents a more irrefragable argument than a thouſand ſermons. Had man perſevered in his original integrity, there could have been no litigation, for there would be no conteſts about property in a world where none would

would be inclined to attack it. Profeſſors of law, therefore, from the attorney who proſecutes for a treſpaſs, to the pleader who defends a criminal, or the judge who condemns him, loudly confirm the doctrine. Every victory by ſea or land ſhould teach us to rejoice with humiliation, for conqueſt itſelf brings a terrible, though ſplendid atteſtation to the truth of the fall of man.

Even thoſe who deny the doctrine, act univerſally more or leſs on the principle. Why do we all ſecure our houſes with bolts, and bars, and locks? Do we take theſe ſteps to defend our lives or property from any *particular* fear? from any ſuſpicion of *this* neighbour, or *that* ſervant, or the *other* invader? No:—It is from a practical conviction of the common depravity; from a conſtant, pervading, but undefined dread of impending evil ariſing from the ſenſe of general corruption. Are not priſons built, and laws enacted, on the ſame practical principle?

But

But, not to defcend to the more degraded part of our fpecies. Why in the faireft tranfaction of bufinefs is nothing executed without bonds, receipts, and notes of hand? why does not a perfect confidence in the *dignity of human nature* abolifh all thefe fecurities; if not between enemies, or people indifferent to each other, yet at leaft between friends and kindred, and the moft honourable connections? why, but becaufe of that univerfal fufpicion between man and man, which, by all we fee, and hear, and feel, is become interwoven with our very make? Though we do not entertain any *individual* fufpicion, nay, though we have the ftrongeft *perfonal* confidence, yet the acknowledged principle of conduct has this doctrine for its bafis. "I will take a receipt, though "it were from my brother," is the eftablifhed voice of mankind; or, as I have heard it more artfully put, by a fallacy of which the very difguife difcovers the

the principle, "Think every man honeſt, "but deal with him as if you knew him "to be otherwiſe." And as in a ſtate of innocence, the beaſts, it is preſumed, would not have bled for the ſuſtenance of man, ſo their parchments would not have been wanted as inſtruments of his ſecurity againſt his fellow man*.

But the grand arguments for this doctrine muſt be drawn from the Holy Scriptures: and theſe, beſides implying it almoſt continually, expreſsly aſſert it; and that in inſtances too numerous to be all of them brought forward here. Of theſe may I be allowed to produce a few? "God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man "was great, and that every imagination "of the thoughts of his heart was only

* Biſhop Butler diſtinctly declares this truth to be evident, from experience as well as Revelation, "that this world exhibits an idea of a RUIN;" and *he* will hazard much who ventures to aſſert that Butler defended Chriſtianity upon principles unconſonant to *reaſon*, *philoſophy*, or *ſound experience*.

"evil continually:"—"God looked upon "the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; "for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon "the earth. And it *repented* the Lord "that he had made man on the earth, and "it *grieved him at his heart**." This is a picture of mankind *before* the flood, and the doctrine receives additional confirmation in Scripture, when it speaks of the times which followed after that tremendous judgment had taken place. The Psalms abound in lamentations on the depravity of man. "They are *all* gone "aside; there is *none* that doeth good, no "not *one*."—"In *thy* sight," says David, addressing the Most High, "shall *no man* "*living* be justified." Job, in his usual lofty strain of interrogation, asks, "What "is man that he should be clean, and he "that is born of a woman that he should "be righteous? Behold the heavens are "not clean in *His* sight, how much more

* Genesis, vi.

"abomi-

"abominable and filthy is man, who "drinketh iniquity like water *?"

Nor do the Scriptures ſpeak of this corruption as ariſing only from occaſional temptation, or from mere extrinſic cauſes. The wiſe man tells us, that "fooliſhneſs is "bound up in the *heart of a child*:" the prophet Jeremiah aſſures us, "the *heart* is "deceitful above all things, and deſperately "wicked:" and David plainly ſtates the doctrine: "Behold, I was ſhapen in ini-"quity, and in ſin did my mother conceive "me." Can language be more explicit?

The New Teſtament corroborates the Old. Our Lord's reproof of Peter ſeems to take the doctrine for granted: "Thou "ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, "but thoſe that be of *man*;" clearly inti-

* Perhaps one reaſon why the faults of the moſt eminent Saints are recorded in Scripture, is to add freſh confirmation to this doctrine. If Abraham, Moſes, Noah, Elijah, David, and Peter ſinned, who, ſhall we preſume to ſay, has eſcaped the univerſal taint?

mating, that the *ways of man* are oppofite to the ways of God. And our Saviour, in that affecting difcourfe to his difciples, obferves to them that, as they were by his grace made *different* from others, therefore they muft expect to be hated by thofe who were fo unlike them. And it fhould be particularly obferved, as another proof that the world is wicked, that our Lord confidered "*the world*" as oppofed to him and to his difciples. "If ye were of the "world, the world would love its own; "but I have chofen you out of the world, "therefore the world hateth you *." St. John, writing to his Chriftian church, ftates the fame truth: "We know that "we are of God, and the whole world "lieth in wickednefs."

Man in his natural and unbelieving ftate is likewife reprefented as in a ftate of *guilt*, and under the difpleafure of Almighty God. "He that believeth not the Son

* John, xv. 19.

"shall not see life; but the wrath of God "*abideth* on him."

Here, however, if it be objected, that the heathen who never heard of the Gospel will not assuredly be judged by it, the Saviour's answer to such curious inquirers concerning the state of others is, "Strive "to enter in at the strait gate." It is enough for us to believe that God, who will "judge the world in righteousness," will judge all men according to their opportunities. The heathen, to whom he has not sent the light of the Gospel will probably not be judged by the Gospel. But with whatever mercy he may judge those who, living in a land of darkness, are without knowledge of his revealed law, *our* business is not with them, but with ourselves. It is *our* business to consider what mercy he will extend to those who, living in a Christian country, abounding with means and ordinances, where the Gospel is preached in its purity; it is *our* business to inquire how he will deal with those who shut their eyes to its beams, who

who close their ears to its truths. For an unbeliever who has passed his life in the meridian of Scripture light, or for an outward but unfruitful professor of Christianity, I know not what hope the Gospel holds out.

The natural state of man is again thus described: "The carnal mind is enmity "against God; (awful thought!) for it "is not subject to the law of God, neither "indeed *can* be. So then they that are "in the flesh *cannot* please God." What the Apostle means by *being in the flesh*, is evident by what follows; for speaking of those whose hearts were changed by Divine grace, he says, "But ye are *not* in "the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that "the spirit of God dwell in you:" that is, you are not now in your natural state: the change that has passed on your minds by the influence of the Spirit of God is so great, that your state may properly be called "being in the spirit." It may be further observed that the same Apostle, writing

writing to the churches of Galatia, tells them, that the natural corruption of the human heart is continually oppoſing the ſpirit of holineſs which influences the regenerate. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the "ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, "and theſe are contrary the one to the "other:" which paſſage by the way, at the ſame time that it proves the corruption of the heart, proves the neceſſity of divine influences. And the Apoſtle, with reſpect to himſelf, freely confeſſes and deeply laments the workings of this corrupt principle: "O wretched man that I "am, who ſhall deliver me from the body "of this death?"

It has been objected by ſome who have oppoſed this doctrine, that the ſame Scriptures which ſpeak of mankind as being *ſinners*, ſpeak of ſome as being *righteous*; and hence they would argue, that though this depravity of human nature may be *general*, yet it cannot be *univerſal*. This objection, when examined, ſerves only, like all other objections againſt the truth,

truth, to eſtabliſh that which it was intended to deſtroy. For what do the Scriptures aſſert reſpecting the righteous? That there are ſome whoſe principles, views, and conduct, are ſo different from the reſt of the world, and from what theirs themſelves once were, that theſe perſons are honoured with the peculiar title of the "ſons of God." But nowhere do the Scriptures aſſert that even theſe are *ſinleſs*; on the contrary their *faults* are frequently mentioned; and perſons of this claſs are moreover repreſented as thoſe on whom a great *change* has paſſed: as having been formerly "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins;" but as "being now *called out* of darkneſs into "light;" as *tranſlated* into the kingdom "of God's dear Son;" as "having *paſſed* "from death to life." And St. Paul put this matter paſt all doubt, by expreſsly aſſerting, that "*they were all* by nature "the children of wrath even as others."

It might be well to aſk certain perſons, who oppoſe the doctrine in queſtion, and who

who alſo ſeem to talk as if they thought there were many ſinleſs people in the world, how they expect that ſuch ſinleſs people will be ſaved? (though indeed to talk of an *innocent* perſon being *ſaved* involves a palpable contradiction in terms, of which thoſe who uſe the expreſſion do not ſeem to be aware; it is talking of curing a man already in health.) "Un-"doubtedly," ſuch will ſay, "they will "be received into thoſe abodes of bliſs "prepared for the righteous."—But be it remembered, there is but *one way* to theſe bliſsful abodes, and that is, through Jeſus Chriſt: "For there is none other name "given among men whereby we muſt be "ſaved." If we aſk whom did Chriſt come to ſave? the Scripture directly anſwers, "He came into the world to ſave *ſin-"ners*:"—"His name was called Jeſus, "becauſe he came to ſave his people *from "their ſins*." When St. John was favoured with a heavenly viſion, he tells us, that he beheld "a great multitude which no man

 "could

"could number, of all nations, and kin-
"dred, and people, and tongues, ſtanding
"before the throne, and before the Lamb,
"clothed with white robes:" that one of the heavenly inhabitants informed him who they were: "Theſe are they who "come out of great tribulation, and have "waſhed their robes, and made them "white in the blood of the Lamb; there-"fore are they before the throne of God, "and ſerve Him day and night in his "Temple; and He that ſitteth on the "throne ſhall dwell among them; they "ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt "any more, neither ſhall the ſun light "on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb "which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall "feed them, and ſhall lead them to living "fountains of waters, and God ſhall wipe "away all tears from their eyes."

We may gather from this deſcription what theſe glorious and happy beings once were: they were *ſinful* creatures: their robes

robes were not *ſpotleſs*: "They had *waſhed* "them, and made them white in the "blood of the Lamb." They are likewiſe generally repreſented as having been once a *ſuffering* people: they came out of great tribulation. They are deſcribed as having overcome the great tempter of mankind, "by the blood of the Lamb *:" as they who "follow the Lamb whitherſoever he "goeth:" as "redeemed from among "men †." And their *employment* in the regions of bliſs is a farther confirmation of the doctrine of which we are treating. "The great multitude," &c. &c. we are told, "ſtood and cried with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, who ſitteth upon "the throne, and to the Lamb!" Here we ſee they aſcribe their ſalvation to Chriſt, and conſequently their preſent happineſs to his atoning blood. And in another of their celeſtial anthems, they ſay in like manner: "Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us "to God by Thy blood, out of every

* Rev. xii. 14. † Rev. xiv. 4.

 "kindred,

"kindred, and tongue, and people, and "nation*."

By all this it is evident that men of any other defcription than *redeemed finners* muft gain admittance to heaven fome other way than that which the Scriptures point out; and alfo that when they fhall arrive there, fo different will be their employment, that they muft have an anthem peculiar to themfelves.

Nothing is more adapted to "the cafting "down of high imaginations," and to promote humility, than this reflection, that heaven is always in Scripture pointed out not as the reward of the innocent, but as the hope of the penitent. This, while it is calculated to "exclude boafting," the temper the moft oppofite to the Gofpel, is yet the moft fuited to afford comfort; for were heaven promifed as the reward of innocence, who could attain to it? but being, as it is, the promifed portion of faith and repentance, purchafed for us by the blood

* Rev. v. 9.

of Chriſt, and offered to every penitent believer, who is compelled to miſs it?

It is urged that the belief of this doctrine of our corruption produces many ill effects, and therefore it ſhould be diſcouraged.—That it does *not* produce thoſe ill effects, when not miſunderſtood or partially repreſented, we ſhall attempt to ſhow: at the ſame time let it be obſerved, if it be really *true* we muſt not reject it on account of any of theſe ſuppoſed ill-conſequences. Truth may often be attended with diſagreeable effects, but if it be truth it muſt ſtill be purſued. If for inſtance, treaſon ſhould exiſt in a country, every one knows the diſagreeable effects which will follow ſuch a conviction; but our *not believing* ſuch treaſon to exiſt, will not prevent ſuch effect following it: on the contrary, our believing it may prevent the fatal conſequences.

It is objected, that this doctrine debaſes and degrades human nature, and that finding fault with the building is only another way of finding fault with the architect. To the

the firſt part of this objection it may be remarked, that if man be really a corrupt, fallen being, it is proper to repreſent him as ſuch: the fault then lies in the *man*, and not in the *doctrine*, which only ſtates the *truth*. As to the inference which is ſuppoſed to follow, namely, that it throws the fault upon the Creator, it proceeds upon the falſe ſuppoſition that man's preſent corrupt ſtate is the ſtate in which he was originally created: the contrary of which is the truth. "God made man up-"right, but he hath found out many in-"ventions."

It is likewiſe objected, that as this doctrine muſt give us ſuch a bad opinion of mankind, it muſt conſequently produce ill-will, hatred, and ſuſpicion. But it ſhould be remembered, that it gives us no worſe an opinion of other men than it gives us of ourſelves; and ſuch views of ourſelves have a very ſalutary effect, inaſmuch as they have a tendency to produce *humility;* and humility is not likely to

pro-

produce ill-will to others, "for only from "pride cometh contention:" and as to the views it gives us of mankind, it repreſents us as *fellow-ſufferers* ; and ſurely the conſideration that we are *companions in miſery* is not calculated to produce hatred. The truth is, theſe effects, where they have actually followed, have followed from a falſe and partial view of the ſubject.

Old perſons who have ſeen much of the world, and who have little religion, are apt to be ſtrong in their belief of man's actual corruption; but not taking it up on Chriſtian grounds, this belief in them ſhows itſelf in a narrow and malignant temper; in uncharitable judgment and harſh opinions, in individual ſuſpicion, and in too general a diſpoſition to hatred.

Suſpicion and hatred alſo are the uſes to which Rochefaucault and the other French philoſophers have converted this doctrine: their acute minds intuitively found the corruption of man, and they ſaw it without its concomitant and correcting doctrine: they allowed

allowed man to be a depraved creature, but difallowed his high original: they found him in a low ftate, but did not conceive of him as having fallen from a better. They reprefent him rather as a brute than an apoftate: not taking into the account that his prefent degraded nature and depraved faculties are not his original ftate: that he is not fuch as he came out of the hands of his Creator, but fuch as he has been made by fin. Nor do they know that he has not even now loft all remains of his primitive dignity, all traces of his divine original, but is ftill capable of a reftoration more glorious

Than is dreamt of in their philofophy.

Perhaps, too, they know from what they *feel*, all the *evil* to which man is inclined; but they do not know, for they have not felt, all the good of which he is capable by the fuperinduction of the divine principle: thus they afperfe human nature inftead of reprefenting it fairly, and in fo doing it is *they* who calumniate the great Creator.

The

The doctrine of corruption is likewise accused of being a gloomy, discouraging doctrine, and an enemy to joy and comfort. Now suppose this objection true in its fullest extent. Is it any way unreasonable that a being fallen into a state of sin, under the displeasure of Almighty God, should feel *seriously alarmed* at being in such a state? Is the condemned criminal blamed because he is not *merry?* And would it be esteemed a kind action to persuade him that he is *not* condemned in order to make him so?

But this charge is *not* true in the sense intended by those who bring it forward. Those who believe this doctrine are *not* the most gloomy people. When, indeed, any one by the influence of the Holy Spirit is brought to view his state as it really is, a state of guilt and danger, it is natural that *fear* should be excited in his mind, but it is such a fear as impels him "to flee from the wrath to come:" it is such a fear as moved Noah to "pre-

"pare an ark to the ſaving of his houſe." Such an one will likewiſe feel *ſorrow;* not however "the ſorrow of the world which "worketh death," but that godly ſorrow which worketh repentance. Such an one is ſaid to be driven to *deſpair* by this doctrine; but it is the deſpair of his own ability to ſave himſelf; it is that wholeſome deſpair of his own merits produced by conviction and humility which drives him to ſeek a better refuge; and ſuch an one is in a proper ſtate to receive the glorious doctrine we are next about to contemplate; namely,

THAT GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOVER BELIEVED ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

Of this doctrine it is of the laſt importance to form juſt views, for as it is the only doctrine which can keep the humble penitent from deſpair, ſo, on the other hand,

hand, great care muſt be taken that falſe views of it do not lead us to preſumption. In order to underſtand it rightly, we muſt not fill our minds with our own reaſonings upon it, which is the way in which ſome good people have been miſled, but we muſt betake ourſelves to the Scriptures, wherein we ſhall find the doctrine ſtated ſo plainly as to ſhew that the miſtakes have not ariſen from a want of clearneſs in the Scriptures, but from a deſire to make it bend to ſome favourite notions. While it has been totally rejected by ſome, it has been ſo mutilated by others, as hardly to retain any reſemblance to the Scripture doctrine of redemption. We are told in the beautiful paſſage laſt quoted *its ſource*—the love of God to a loſt world;—*who* the Redeemer was—the Son of God;—the *end* for which this plan was formed and executed—"that whoſoever believed in "him ſhould not periſh, but have ever-"laſting life."—"As I live, ſaith the "Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of "the

"the wicked."—"He would have all "men to be ſaved and to come to the "knowledge of the truth."—"He would "not have any periſh, but that all ſhould "come to repentance." There is nothing ſurely in all this to promote gloomineſs. On the contrary, if kindneſs and mercy have a tendency to win and warm the heart, here is every incentive to joy and cheerfulneſs. Chriſtianity looks kindly towards all, and with peculiar tenderneſs on ſuch as, from humbling views of their own unworthineſs, might be led to fancy themſelves excluded:—we are expreſsly told, that "Chriſt died for *all*:"—that "he taſted "death for *every* man;"—that "he died "for the ſins of the *whole world*." Accordingly he has commanded that his Goſpel ſhould be "preached to *every creature*;" which is in effect declaring, that not a ſingle human being is excluded: for to preach the Goſpel is to offer a Saviour:—and the Saviour in the plaineſt language offers himſelf to all,—declaring

to

to "all the ends of the earth,"—"Look "unto me and be ſaved." It is therefore an undeniable truth, that no one will periſh for *want* of a Saviour, but for *rejecting* him. That none are excluded who do not exclude themſelves, as many unhappily do, who "reject the counſel of "God againſt themſelves, and ſo receive "the grace of God in vain."

But to ſuppoſe that becauſe Chriſt has *died* for the "ſins of the whole world," the whole world will therefore be *ſaved*, is a moſt fatal miſtake. In the ſame book which tells us that "Chriſt died for all," we have likewiſe this awful admonition; "Strait is the gate, and *few* there be "that find it;" which, whether it be underſtood of the immediate reception of the Goſpel, or of the final uſe which was too likely to be made of it, gives no encouragement to hope that *all* will be qualified to partake of its promiſes. And whilſt it declares that "there is no other name

"whereby

" whereby we may be ſaved but the name " of Jeſus;" it likewiſe declares

THAT "WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN "SHALL SEE THE LORD."

It is much to be feared that ſome, in their zeal to defend the Goſpel doctrines of free grace, have materially injured the Goſpel doctrine of holineſs: ſtating, that Chriſt has done all in ſuch a ſenſe, as that there is nothing left for us to do.—But do the Scriptures hold out this language?— "Come, for all things are ready," is the Goſpel call; in which we may obſerve, that at the ſame time that it tells us that "all things are ready," it nevertheleſs tells us that we muſt "*come*." Food being *provided* for us will not benefit us except we *partake* of it.—It will not avail us that "Chriſt our paſſover is *ſacrificed* "for us," unleſs "we *keep* the feaſt."— We muſt *make uſe* of "the fountain which "is opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs," if

if we would be *purified.* "All, indeed, "who are *athirſt* are invited to take of the "waters of life freely;" but if we feel no "*thirſt*;" if we do not *drink*, their ſaving qualities are of no avail.

It is the more neceſſary to inſiſt on this in the preſent day, as there is a worldly and faſhionable, as well as a low and ſectarian Antinomianiſm: there lamentably prevails in the world an unwarranted aſſurance of Salvation, founded on a ſlight, vague, and general confidence in what Chriſt has done and ſuffered for us, as if the great object of his doing and ſuffering had been to emancipate *us* from all obligations to duty and obedience; and as if, becauſe he died for ſinners, we might therefore ſafely and comfortably go on to live in ſin, contenting ourſelves with now and then a tranſient, formal, and unmeaning avowal of our unworthineſs, our obligation, and the all-ſufficiency of *his* atonement. By the diſcharge of this quit-rent, of which all the coſt conſiſts in the acknowledgment, the

the ſenſual, the worldly, and the vain hope to find a refuge in heaven, when driven from the enjoyments of this world. But this cheap and indolent Chriſtianity is nowhere taught in the Bible. The faith inculcated *there* is not a lazy, profeſſional faith, but that faith which "produceth "*obedience*," that faith which "worketh "by love," that faith of which the practical language is—"*Strive* that you may "enter in;"—"So *run* that you may "obtain;"—"So *fight* that you may lay "hold on eternal life:"—that faith which directs us "not to be weary in well-doing;" —which ſays, "*Work* out your own ſal-"vation:"—never forgetting at the ſame time, "that it is God which worketh in us "both to will and to do." The contrary doctrine is implied in the very name of the Redeemer: "And his name ſhall be called "Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people *from* "their ſins," not *in* their ſins.—Are thoſe rich ſupplies of grace which the Goſpel offers; are thoſe abundant aids of the ſpirit

which

which it promiſes, tendered to the *ſlothful?*—No.—God will have all his gifts improved. Grace muſt be uſed, or it will be withdrawn. The Almighty thinks it not derogatory to his free grace to declare, that "thoſe only who do his commandments have right to the tree of life." And the Scriptures repreſent it as not derogatory to the *ſacrifice* of Chriſt, to follow his example in well-doing. The only caution is, that we muſt not work in our own ſtrength, nor bring in our contribution of works as if in aid of the ſuppoſed deficiency of His merits.

For we muſt not in our *over-caution* fancy, that becauſe Chriſt has "redeemed us from the curſe of the law," we are therefore without a law. In acknowledging Chriſt as a deliverer, we muſt not forget that he is a law-giver too, and that we are expreſsly commanded "to fulfil the law of Chriſt:" if we wiſh to know what his laws are, we muſt "ſearch the Scriptures,"

" tures," eſpecially the New Teſtament; there we ſhall find him declaring

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE OF HEART AND LIFE:

Our Saviour ſays, that " except a man be " born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom " of God:" that it is not a mere acknowledging His authority, calling him " Lord, " Lord," that will avail any thing, except we DO what He commands: that any thing ſhort of this is like a man building his houſe upon the ſands, which, when the ſtorms come on, will certainly fall. In like manner the Apoſtles are continually enforcing the neceſſity of this change, which they deſcribe under the various names of " the new man *,"—" the new " creature †;"—" a transformation into " the image of God ‡;"—" a participation " of the divine nature ‖." Nor is this

* Epheſians, iv. 24. † Galatians, vi. 15.
‡ 2 Corinthians, xii. ‖ 2 Peter, i. 4.

change

change reprefented as confifting merely in a change of religious opinions, not even in being delivered over from a worfe to a better fyftem of doctrines, nor in exchanging grofs fins for thofe which are more fober and reputable; nor in renouncing the fins of youth, and affuming thofe of a quieter period of life; nor in leaving off evil practices becaufe men are grown tired of them, or find they injure their credit, health, or fortune; nor does it confift in inoffenfivenefs and obliging manners, nor indeed in any merely *outward* reformation.

But the change confifts in "being re-"newed in the fpirit of our minds;" in being "conformed to the image of the "Son of God;" in being "called out "of darknefs into His marvellous light." And the whole of this great change, its beginning, progrefs, and final accomplifhment, (for it is reprefented as a *gradual* change,) is afcribed to

THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are perpetually reminded of our utter inability to help ourſelves, that we may ſet the higher value on thoſe gracious aids which are held out to us. We are taught that "we are not ſufficient to *think* "any thing as of ourſelves, but our "ſufficiency is of God." And when we are told that "if we live after the fleſh, "we ſhall die," we are at the ſame time reminded, that it is "through the *ſpirit* that "we muſt mortify the deeds of the body." We are likewiſe cautioned that we "grieve "not the Holy Spirit of God;" "that we "quench not the Spirit." By all which expreſſions, and many others of like import, we are taught that, while we are to aſcribe with humble gratitude every good thought, word, and work, to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we are not to look on ſuch influences as ſuperſeding our own exertions: and it is too plain that we *may* reject

ject the gracious offers of affiftance, fince otherwife there would be no occafion to caution us *not* to do it. The Scriptures have illuftrated this in terms which are familiar indeed, but which are therefore only the more condefcending and endearing. "Behold, I ftand at the door and "knock. If any man hear my voice and "open the door, I will come in to him, "and will fup with him, and he with "me." Obferve, it is not faid, if any man will not liften to me, I will force open the door. But if we refufe admittance to fuch a gueft, we muft abide by the confequences.

The fublime doctrine of divine affiftance is the more to be prized, not only on account of our own helplefnefs, but from the additional confideration of the powerful adverfary with whom the Chriftian has to contend: an article of our faith by the way, which is growing into general difrepute among the politer claffes of fociety. Nay, there is a kind of ridicule attached to

to the very ſuggeſtion of the ſubject, as if it were exploded by general agreement, on full proof of its being an abſolute abſurdity, utterly repugnant to the liberal ſpirit of an enlightened age. And it requires no ſmall neatneſs of expreſſion and periphraſtic ingenuity to get the very mention tolerated: —I mean

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE EXISTENCE AND POWER OF OUR GREAT SPIRITUAL ENEMY.

This is conſidered by the faſhionable ſceptic as a vulgar invention, which ought to be baniſhed with the belief in dreams, and ghoſts, and witchcraft:—by the faſhionable Chriſtian, as an ingenious allegory, but not as a literal truth; and by almoſt all, as a doctrine which, when it happens to be introduced at Church, has at leaſt nothing to do with the *pews*, but is by common conſent made over to the *aiſles*, if indeed it muſt be retained at all.

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May I, with great humility and reſpect, preſume to ſuggeſt to our divines that they would do well not to lend their countenance to theſe modiſh curtailments of the Chriſtian faith; nor to ſhun the introduction of this doctrine whenever it conſiſts with their ſubject to bring it forward. A truth which is ſeldom brought before the eye, imperceptibly grows leſs and leſs important; and if it be an unpleaſing truth, we grow more and more reconciled to its abſence, till at length its intruſion becomes offenſive, and we learn in the end to renounce what we at firſt only neglected. Becauſe ſome coarſe and ranting enthuſiaſts have been fond of uſing tremendous terms and awful denunciations with a violence and frequency, which might make it ſeem to be a gratification to them to denounce judgments and anticipate torments, can *their* coarſeneſs or vulgarity make a true doctrine falſe, or an important one trifling? If ſuch preachers have given offence by their uncouth manner of managing an awful doctrine,

doctrine, that indeed furnishes a caution to treat the subject more discreetly, but it is no just reason for avoiding the doctrine. For to keep a truth out of sight because it has been absurdly handled or ill-defended, might in time be assigned as a reason for keeping back, one by one, every doctrine of our holy church; for which of them has not occasionally had imprudent advocates or weak champions?

Be it remembered that the doctrine in question is not only interwoven by allusion, implication, or direct assertion throughout the whole Scripture, but that it stands prominently *personified* at the opening of the New as well as the Old Testament. The devil's temptation of our Lord, in which he is not represented figuratively, but visibly and palpably, stands exactly on the same ground of authority with other events which are received without repugnance. And it may not be an unuseful observation to remark, that the very refusing to believe in an evil spirit, may be considered

confidered as one of his own fuggeftions; for there is not a more dangerous illufion than to believe ourfelves out of the reach of illufions, nor a more alarming temptation than to fancy that we are not liable to be tempted.

But the dark cloud raifed by this doctrine will be difpelled by the cheering certainty that our bleffed Saviour having himfelf "been tempted like as we are, is able to "deliver thofe who are tempted."

To return.—From this imperfect fketch we may fee how fuitable the religion of Chrift is to fallen man! How exactly it meets every want! No one needs now perifh becaufe he is a finner, provided he be willing to forfake his fins; for "Jefus "Chrift came into the world to fave fin-"ners:" and "He is now exalted to be a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance "and forgivenefs of fin." Which paffage, be it obferved, may be confidered as pointing out to us the *order* in which he beftows

his

his bleſſings; he gives firſt *repentance*, and then *forgiveneſs*.

We may likewiſe ſee how much the character of a true Chriſtian riſes above every other: that there is a wholeneſs, an integrity, a completeneſs in the Chriſtian character: that a few natural, pleaſing qualities, not caſt in the mould of the Goſpel, are but as beautiful fragments, or well-turned ſingle limbs, which for want of that beauty which ariſes from the proportion of parts, for want of that connection of the members with the living head, are of little comparative excellence. There may be amiable qualities which are not Chriſtian graces: and the Apoſtle, after enumerating every ſeparate article of attack or defence with which a Chriſtian warrior is to be accoutred, ſums up the matter by directing that we put on "the *whole* armour of God." And this *completeneſs* is inſiſted on by all the Apoſtles. One prays that his converts may "ſtand *perfect*

"*fect* and *complete* in the whole will of "God:" another enjoins that they be "*perfect* and *entire*, wanting nothing."

Now we are not to ſuppoſe that they expected any convert to be *without faults;* they knew too well the conſtitution of the human heart to form ſo unfounded an expectation. But Chriſtians muſt have no fault in their *principle;* their views muſt be direct, their propoſed *ſcheme* muſt be faultleſs; their *intention* muſt be ſingle; their *ſtandard* muſt be lofty; their *object* muſt be right; their "*mark* muſt be the "high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus."—There muſt be no *allowed* evil, no *warranted* defection, no *tolerated* impurity, no *habitual* irregularity. Though they do not riſe as high as they ought, nor as they wiſh, in the ſcale of perfection, yet the ſcale itſelf muſt be correct, and the deſire of aſcending perpetual: counting nothing done while any thing remains undone. Every grace muſt be kept in exerciſe; conqueſts once made over an evil propenſity muſt not only be

be maintained but extended. And in truth, Chriſtianity ſo compriſes contrary, and as it may be thought irreconcileable excellencies, that thoſe which ſeem ſo incompatible as to be incapable by nature of being inmates of the ſame breaſt, are almoſt neceſſarily involved in the Chriſtian character.

For inſtance; Chriſtianity requires that our faith be at once fervent and ſober; that our love be both ardent and laſting; that our patience be not only heroic but gentle; ſhe demands dauntleſs zeal and genuine humility; active ſervices and complete ſelf-renunciation; high attainments in goodneſs, with deep conſciouſneſs of defect; courage in reproving, and meekneſs in bearing reproof; a quick perception of what is ſinful, with a willingneſs to forgive the offender; active virtue ready to *do* all, and paſſive virtue ready to *bear* all.—We muſt ſtretch every faculty in the ſervice of our Lord, and yet bring every thought into obedience to Him: while we

aim

aim to live in the exercise of every Christian grace, we must account ourselves unprofitable servants: we must *strive* for the crown, yet receive it as a *gift*, and then lay it at our master's feet: while we are busily trading in the world with our Lord's talents, we must "commune with our "heart, and be still:" while we strive to practise the purest disinterestedness, we must be contented though we meet with selfishness in return; and while laying out our lives for the good of mankind, we must submit to reproach without murmuring, and to ingratitude without resentment. And to render us equal to all these services, Christianity bestows not only the precept, but the power; she does what the great poet of Ethics lamented that Reason could not do, "she lends us arms as "well as rules."

For here, if not only the worldly and the timid, but the humble and the well-disposed, should demand with fear and trembling, "Who is sufficient for these "things?"

" things?" Revelation makes its own reviving anſwer, " My grace is ſufficient for " thee."

It will be well here to diſtinguiſh that there are two ſorts of Chriſtian profeſſors, one of which affect to ſpeak of Chriſtianity as if it were a mere ſyſtem of doctrines, with little reference to their influence on life and manners; while the other conſider it as exhibiting a ſcheme of human duties independent on its doctrines. For though the latter ſort may admit the doctrines, yet they contemplate them as a ſeparate and diſconnected ſet of opinions, rather than as an influential principle of action.— In violation of that beautiful harmony which ſubſiſts in every part of Scripture between practice and belief, the religious world furniſhes two ſorts of people who ſeem to enliſt themſelves, as if in oppoſition, under the banners of Saint Paul and Saint James; as if thoſe two great champions of the Chriſtian cauſe had fought for two maſters. Thoſe who af-

fect refpectively to be the difciples of each, treat faith and works as if they were oppofite interefts, inftead of infeparable points: Nay, they go farther, and fet Saint Paul at variance with himfelf.

Now, inftead of reafoning on the point, let us refer to the Apoftle in queftion, who himfelf definitively fettles the difpute. The Apoftolical order and method in this refpect deferve notice and imitation: for it is obfervable that the earlier parts of moft of the epiftles abound in the *doctrines* of Chriftianity, while thofe latter chapters, which wind up the fubject, exhibit all the *duties* which grow out of them, as the natural and neceffary productions of fuch a living root*. But this alternate mention of doctrine and practice, which feemed likely to *unite*, has on the contrary formed a fort

* This is the language of our church, as may be feen in her 12th article; *viz.*

Good works do fpring out neceffarily of a true and lively faith; infomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree difcerned by its fruit.

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of line of ſeparation between theſe two orders of believers, and introduced a broken and mutilated ſyſtem. Thoſe who would make Chriſtianity conſiſt of doctrines only, dwell, for inſtance, on the firſt eleven chapters of the Epiſtle to the Romans, as containing excluſively the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel. While the mere moraliſts, who wiſh to ſtrip Chriſtianity of her lofty and appropriate attributes, delight to dwell on the *twelfth* chapter, which is a table of duties, as excluſively as if the preceding chapters made no part of the ſacred Canon. But Saint Paul himſelf, who was at leaſt as ſound a theologian as any of his commentators, ſettles the matter another way, by making the duties of the twelfth grow out of the doctrines of the antecedent *eleven*, juſt as any other conſequence grows out of its cauſe. And as if he ſuſpected that the indiviſible union between them might poſſibly be over-looked, he links the two diſtinct diviſions together by a logical " therefore," with which the twelfth

twelfth begins:—"I beſeech you *therefore*," (that is, as the effect of all I have been inculcating,) "that you preſent your bodies "a living ſacrifice, acceptable to God," &c. and then goes on to enforce on them, as a conſequence of what he had been preaching, the practice of every Chriſtian virtue. This combined view of the ſubject ſeems on the one hand, to be the only means of preventing the ſubſtitution of Pagan morality for Chriſtian holineſs: and, on the other, of ſecuring the leading doctrine of juſtification by faith, from the dreadful danger of Antinomian licentiouſneſs; every human obligation being thus grafted on the living ſtock of a divine principle.

CHAP. XXI.

On the duty and efficacy of Prayer.

It is not propofed to enter largely on a topic which has been exhaufted by the ableft pens. But as a work of this nature feems to require that fo important a fubject fhould not be overlooked, it is intended to notice in a flight manner a few of thofe many difficulties and popular objections which are brought forward againft the ufe and efficacy of prayer, even by thofe who would be unwilling to be fufpected of impiety and unbelief.

There is a clafs of objectors who ftrangely profefs to withhold homage from the Moft High, not out of contempt, but reverence. They affect to confider the ufe of prayer as derogatory from the omnifcience of God, afferting that it looks

as if we thought he ſtood in need of being informed of our wants; and as derogatory from his goodneſs, as implying that he needs to be put in mind of them.

But is it not enough for ſuch poor frail beings as we are to know, that God himſelf does not conſider prayer as derogatory either to his wiſdom or goodneſs? And ſhall *we* erect ourſelves into judges of what is conſiſtent with the attributes of HIM before whom angels fall proſtrate with ſelf-abaſement? Will he thank ſuch defenders of his attributes, who, while they profeſs to reverence, ſcruple not to diſobey him? It ought rather to be viewed as a great encouragement to prayer, that we are addreſſing a Being, who knows our wants better than we can expreſs them, and whoſe preventing goodneſs is always ready to relieve them. Prayer ſeems to unite the different attributes of the Almighty; for if he is indeed the God that heareth prayer, that is the beſt reaſon why "to "Him all fleſh ſhould come."

It is objected by another clafs, and on the fpecious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himfelf quite as humble as his plea would be thought, that it is arrogant in fuch infignificant beings as we are to prefume to lay our petty neceffities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condefcend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requefts which are brought before him by his creatures. Thefe and fuch like objections arife from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Creator. It feems as if thofe who make them confidered the Moft High as "fuch an one as them-"felves;" a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of bufinefs, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at beft, is it not confidering the Almighty in the light, not of an infinite God, but of a great man, of a minifter, or a king, who, while he fuperintends public and national concerns, is obliged to neglect fmall and individual petitions, becaufe his

hands

hands being full, he cannot ſpare that leiſure and attention which ſuffice for every thing? They do not conſider him as that infinitely glorious Being, who, while he beholds at once all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the ſame time as attentive to the prayer of the poor deſtitute, as preſent to the ſorrowful ſighing of the priſoner, as if each of theſe forlorn creatures were individually the object of his undivided attention.

Theſe critics, who are for ſparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and, if I may ſo ſpeak without profaneneſs, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by aſſigning to his care only ſuch a portion as may be more eaſily managed, ſeem to have no adequate conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wiſdom puts him as eaſily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whoſe plans complexity makes no difficulty, va-

riety no obſtruction, and multiplicity on confuſion; that to ubiquity diſtance does not exiſt; that to infinity ſpace is annihilated; that paſt, preſent, and future, are diſcerned more accurately at one glance of His eye, to whom a thouſand years are as one day, than a ſingle moment of time or a ſingle point of ſpace can be by ours.

To the other part of the objection, founded on the ſuppoſed interference (that is, irreconcileableneſs) of one man's petitions with thoſe of another, this anſwer ſeems to ſuggeſt itſelf: firſt, that we muſt take care that when we aſk, we do not "aſk amiſs;" that, for inſtance, we aſk chiefly, and in an unqualified manner, only for ſpiritual bleſſings to ourſelves and others; and in doing this the prayer of one man *cannot* interfere with that of another, becauſe no proportion of ſanctity or virtue implored by one obſtructs the ſame attainments in another. Next, in aſking for temporal and inferior bleſſings, we muſt *qualify* our petition, even though it

ſhould

ſhould extend to deliverance from the ſevereſt pains, or to our very life itſelf, according to that example of our Saviour: "Father, *if it be poſſible*, let this cup paſs "from me. *Neverthelefs, not my will*, "but thine, be done." By thus qualifying our prayer, we exerciſe ourſelves in an act of reſignation to God; we profeſs not to wiſh what will interfere with his benevolent plan, and yet we may hope by prayer to ſecure the bleſſing ſo far as it is conſiſtent with it. Perhaps the reaſon why this objection to prayer is ſo ſtrongly felt, is the too great diſpoſition to pray for merely temporal and worldly bleſſings, and to deſire them in the moſt unqualified manner, not ſubmitting to be without them, even though the granting them ſhould be inconſiſtent with the general plan of Providence.

Another claſs continue to bring forward, as pertinaciouſly as if it had never been anſwered, the exhauſted argument, that ſeeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him: that events themſelves

themſelves being ſettled in a fixed and unalterable courſe, and bound in a fatal neceſſity, it is folly to think that we can diſturb the eſtabliſhed laws of the univerſe, or interrupt the courſe of Providence by our prayers: and that it is abſurd to ſuppoſe theſe firm decrees can be reverſed by any requeſts of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackleſs field of fate and free will, from which purſuit I am kept back equally by the moſt profound ignorance and the moſt invincible diſlike, I would only obſerve, that theſe objections apply equally to all human actions as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the ſame propriety be urged, that ſeeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own ſtate. Weak as well as impious reaſoning! It may be queſtioned whether even the modern French and German philoſophers might not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the exiſtence of God, if they

they might make ſuch a uſe of his attributes. The truth is, (and it is a truth diſcoverable without any depth of learning,) all theſe objections are the offspring of *pride*. Poor, ſhort-ſighted man cannot reconcile the omniſcience and decrees of God with the efficacy of prayer; and becauſe *he* cannot reconcile them, he modeſtly concludes they are irreconcileable. How much more wiſdom as well as happineſs reſults from an humble Chriſtian ſpirit! Such a plain practical text as, "Draw "near unto God, and he will draw near "unto you," carries more conſolation, more true knowledge of his wants and their remedy to the heart of a penitent ſinner, than all the "tomes of caſuiſtry," which have puzzled the world ever ſince the queſtion was firſt ſet afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was ſuch a thing as motion, in anſwer to the philoſopher who, in an elaborate theory, denied it: ſo the plain

plain Chriſtian, when he is borne down with the aſſurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires no better argument to repel the aſſertion than the good he finds in prayer itſelf.

All the doubts propoſed to him reſpecting God, do not ſo much affect him as this one doubt reſpecting himſelf: "If I "regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord "will not hear me." For the chief doubt and difficulty of a real Chriſtian conſiſts, not ſo much in a diſtruſt of God's ability and willingneſs to anſwer the prayer of the upright, as in a diſtruſt of his own uprightneſs, as in a doubt whether he himſelf belongs to that deſcription of perſons to whom the promiſes are made, and of the quality of the prayer which he offers up.

Let the ſubjects of a dark fate maintain a ſullen, or the ſlaves of a blind chance a hopeleſs ſilence, but let the child of a compaſſionate Almighty Father ſupplicate His mercies with an humble confidence, inſpired

inſpired by the aſſurance, that "the very "hairs of his head are numbered." Let him take comfort in that individual and minute attention, without which not a ſparrow falls to the ground, as well as in that heart-cheering promiſe, that, as "the "eyes of the Lord are over the righteous," ſo are "his ears open to their prayers." And as a pious Biſhop has obſerved, "Our Saviour has as it were hedged in and incloſed the Lord's prayer with theſe "two great fences of our faith, God's "*willingneſs* and his *power* to help us:" the preface to it aſſures us of the one, which by calling God by the tender name of "Our Father," intimates his *readineſs* to help his children: and the animating concluſion, "Thine is the *power*," reſcues us from every unbelieving doubt of his *ability* to help us.

A Chriſtian knows, becauſe he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inſcrutable, the medium of connection between God and his rational creatures; the

the means appointed by him to draw down his bleſſings upon us. The Chriſtian knows that prayer is the appointed means of uniting two ideas, one of the higheſt magnificence, the other of the moſt profound lowlineſs, within the compaſs of imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between "the High and "Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," and that heart of the "contrite in which "he delights to dwell." He knows that this inexplicable union between Beings ſo unſpeakably, ſo eſſentially different, can only be maintained by prayer; that this is the ſtrong but ſecret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with Heaven, man with God.

The plain Chriſtian, as was before obſerved, cannot explain why it is ſo; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is contented to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more poſtpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reaſoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he

will

will poſtpone eating till he can give a ſcientific lecture on the nature of digeſtion: he is contented with knowing that his meat has nouriſhed him; and he leaves to the philoſopher, who may chooſe to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatiſe, to ſtarve in the interim. The Chriſtian feels better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his ſpiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than thoſe of his natural life without frequent bodily nouriſhment. He feels renovation and ſtrength grow out of the uſe of the appointed means, as neceſſarily in the one caſe as in the other. He feels that the health of his ſoul can no more be ſuſtained, and its powers kept in continued vigour by the *prayers* of a diſtant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a diſtant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in queſtion, far more conſtraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperious than any argu-

ment on its utility, than any convictions of its efficacy, even than any experience of its consolations. *Prayer is the command of God;* the plain, positive, repeated injunction of the Most High, who declares, "He will be inquired of." This is enough to secure the obedience of the Christian, even though a promise were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this case, to our unspeakable comfort, the promise is as clear as the precept: "*Ask*, and ye shall *receive*:— "*Seek*, and ye shall *find*:—Knock, and it "shall be opened unto you." This is encouragement enough for the plain Christian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general scheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs; how God has left himself at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Christian does not very critically examine, his precise and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine; and probably this

 being

being among the "ſecret things which "belong to God," and not to us, it will lie hidden among thoſe numberleſs myſteries which we ſhall not fully underſtand till faith be loſt in ſight.

In the mean time it is enough for the humble believer to be aſſured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right: it is enough for him to be aſſured in that word of God "which cannot lie," of numberleſs actual inſtances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining bleſſings and averting calamities, both national and individual: it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally, by that internal evidence which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himſelf has received from prayer when all other comforts have failed:—and above all to end with the ſame motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty, —it is motive enough for him,—that *thus ſaith the Lord.* For when a ſerious Chriſtian

tian has once got a plain unequivocal command from his Maker on any point, he never ſuſpends his obedience while he is amuſing himſelf with looking about for ſubordinate motives of action. Inſtead of curiouſly analyſing the nature of the duty, he conſiders how he ſhall beſt fulfil it: for on theſe points at leaſt it may be ſaid without controverſy, that "the igno-"rant (and here who is *not* ignorant?) "*have nothing to do with the law but to* "*obey it.*"

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of theſe premiſes, yet neglect to build practical conſequences on the admiſſion of them; who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular obſervance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleaſure, or buſineſs, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who by living almoſt without prayer, may be ſaid "to live almoſt without God in "the world." To ſuch we can only ſay, that

that they little know what they loſe. The time is haſtening on when they will look upon thoſe bleſſings as invaluable, which now they think not worth aſking for; when they will bitterly regret the abſence of thoſe means and opportunities which now they either neglect or deſpiſe. "O that they were wiſe! that they un-"derſtood this! that they would conſider "their latter end!"

There are again others, who it is to be feared, having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well-grounded in thoſe principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally diſcontinued it. "They do not find," ſay they, "that their affairs proſper the better or "the worſe; or perhaps they were un-"ſucceſsful in their affairs even before "they dropt the practice, and ſo had no "encouragement to go on." They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worſe their

their affairs might have gone on, had they diſcontinued it ſooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do not *know* that perhaps "they aſked "amiſs," or that, if they had obtained what they aſked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never "reſtrains prayer," becauſe he is not certain he obtains every individual requeſt; for he is perſuaded that God, in compaſſion to our ignorance, ſometimes in great mercy withholds what we deſire, and often diſappoints his moſt favoured children by giving them, not what they aſk, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate* obſerves, cries for the ſhining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to perſevere when we have not the encouragement of viſible ſucceſs, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy per-

* Biſhop Hall.

ſeverance

ſeverance Job was a noble inſtance. Defeat and diſappointment rather ſtimulated than ſtopped *his* prayers. Though in a vehement ſtrain of paſſionate eloquence he exclaims, "I cry out of wrong, but I "am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is "no judgment:" yet ſo perſuaded was he notwithſtanding of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he perſiſted againſt all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of unſhaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that ſublime apoſtrophe, "Though he ſlay "me, yet I will truſt in him!"

But may we not ſay that there is a conſiderable claſs, who not only bring none of the objections which we have ſtated againſt the uſe of prayer; who are ſo far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is conſiſtent with their ideas of their own ſafety; who, while they conſider prayer as an indiſpenſable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of

of thofe holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many who yet adhere fcrupuloufly to the letter, are fo far from entering into the fpirit of this duty, that they are ftrongly inclined to fufpect thofe of hypocrify who adopt the true fcriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be fo wrefted as to be made to fpeak almoft any language in fupport of almoft any opinion, thefe perfons lay hold on Scripture itfelf to bear them out in their own flight views of this duty; and they profefs to borrow from thence the ground of that cenfure which they caft on the more ferious Chriftians. Among the many paffages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to their original defign, none have been feized upon with more avidity by fuch perfons than the pointed cenfures of our Saviour on thofe "who for a pretence make long "prayers;" as well as on thofe "who "ufe vain repetitions, and think they "fhall be heard for much fpeaking." Now the things here intended to be reproved,

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were the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all those who depended on the success of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant those severe reprehensions should cool or abridge the devotion of pious Christians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or fewer words, however, so little constitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the most affecting specimens on record is the short petition of the Publican; full fraught as it is with that spirit of contrition and self-abasement which is the very principle and soul of prayer. And this specimen perhaps is the best model for that sudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But I doubt, in general, whether those few hasty words to which these frugal petitioners would stint the scanty devotions of others and themselves, will be always found ample enough to satisfy the humble penitent, who, being

 a sinner,

a ſinner, has much to confeſs; who, hoping he is a pardoned ſinner, has much to acknowledge. Such an one perhaps cannot always pour out the fulneſs of his ſoul within the preſcribed abridgments. Even the ſincereſt Chriſtian, when he wiſhes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldneſs. Though he feel that he has received much, and has therefore much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward ſpirit into ſuch a poſture as ſhall fit it for the ſolemn buſineſs; for ſuch an one has not merely his form to repeat, but he has his tempers to reduce to order, his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the ſarcaſm of the Prophet on the Idol Baal, "they may be gone a journey," and muſt be recalled; his heart perhaps "ſleepeth, "and muſt be awaked." A devout ſupplicant too will labour to affect and warm his mind with a ſenſe of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehoſophat, he will

will ſometimes enumerate "the power, and "the might, and the mercies of the Moſt "High," in order to ſtir up the ſentiments of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own ſoul *. He will labour to imitate the example of his Saviour, whoſe heart dilated with the expreſſion of the ſame holy affections. "I thank thee, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." A heart thus animated, thus warmed with divine love, cannot always ſcrupulouſly limit itſelf to the mere *buſineſs* of prayer, if I may ſo ſpeak. It cannot content itſelf with merely ſpreading out its own neceſſities, but expands in contemplating the perfections of Him to whom he is addreſſing them. The humble ſupplicant, though he be no longer *governed* by a love of the world, yet grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep ſenſe of his own wants, and of the abundant

* 2 Chron. xx. 5, 6.

provision

provifion which is made for them in the Gofpel; yet when he moft wifhes to be rejoicing in thofe ftrong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn his worldlinefs, his infenfibility, his deadnefs. He has to deplore the littlenefs and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The beft Chriftian is but too liable, during the temptations of the day, to be enfnared by "the luft of the eye, "and the pride of life," and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but duft and afhes. How can even good perfons, who are juft come perhaps from liftening to the flattery of their fellow-worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miferable finners? They require a little time, to imprefs on their own fouls the truth of that folemn confeffion of fin they are making to Him, without which brevity and not length might conftitute hypocrify. Even the fincerely pious have in prayer grievous

grievous wanderings to lament, from which others miſtakingly ſuppoſe the advanced Chriſtian to be exempt. Such wanderings that, as an old divine has obſerved, it would exceedingly humble a good man, could he, after he had prayed, be made to ſee his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thruſt themſelves in amongſt them. So that ſuch an one will indeed, from a ſtrong ſenſe of theſe diſtractions, feel deep occaſion with the prophet to aſk forgiveneſs for "the "iniquity of his *holy* things:" and would find cauſe enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the ſins of his prayers only.

We know that ſuch a brief petition as, "Lord help my unbelief," if the ſupplicant be in ſo happy a frame, and the prayer be darted up with ſuch ſtrong faith that his very ſoul mounts with the petition, may ſuffice to draw down a bleſſing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner:

petitioner: yet, if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether they be long or ſhort; if the true definition of prayer be, that it is *the deſire of the heart;* if it be that ſecret communion between God and the ſoul which is the very breath and being of religion; then is the Scripture ſo far from ſuggeſting that ſhort meaſure of which it is accuſed, that it expreſsly ſays, "Pray without ceaſing:"—"Pray evermore:"—"I will that men "pray every where:—"Continue inſtant "in prayer."

If ſuch "repetitions" as theſe objectors reprobate, ſtir up deſires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited (for "*vain* repetitions" are ſuch as awaken or expreſs no new deſire, and ſerve no religious purpoſe); then are "repetitions" not to be condemned. And that our Saviour did not give the warning againſt "long prayers and repetitions" in the ſenſe theſe objectors allege, is evident from his own practice; for once we are told

told " he continued *all night* in prayer to " God." And again, in a moſt awful criſis of his life, it is expreſsly ſaid, " He prayed " the third *third* time, uſing *the ſame* " *words* *."

All habits gain by exerciſe; of courſe the Chriſtian graces gain force and vigour by being called out, and, as it were, muſtered in prayer. Love, faith, and truſt in the divine promiſes if they were not kept alive by this ſtated intercourſe with God, would wither and die. Prayer is alſo one great ſource and chief encourager of holineſs. " If I regard iniquity in my heart " the Lord will not hear me."

Prayer poſſeſſes the twofold property of fitting and preparing the heart to receive the bleſſings we pray for, in caſe we ſhould attain them; and of fortifying and diſpoſing it to ſubmit to the will of God, in caſe it ſhould be his pleaſure to withhold them.

A ſenſe of ſin ſhould be ſo far from keeping us from prayer, through a falſe

* Matt. xxvi. 44.

plea

plea of unworthineſs, that the humility growing on this very conſciouſneſs is the trueſt and ſtrongeſt incentive to prayer. There is, for our example and encouragement, a beautiful union of faith and humility in the Prodigal—"I have ſinned "againſt heaven and before Thee, and "am no more worthy to be called thy "Son." This, as it might ſeem to imply hopeleſſneſs of pardon, might be ſuppoſed to promote unwillingneſs to aſk it; but the broken-hearted penitent drew the direct contrary concluſion—"I will ariſe "and go to my Father!"

Prayer, to make it accepted, requires neither genius, eloquence, nor language; but ſorrow for ſin, faith, and humility. It is the cry of diſtreſs, the ſenſe of want, the abaſement of contrition, the energy of gratitude. It is not an elaborate ſtring of well arranged periods, nor an exerciſe of ingenuity, nor an effort of the memory; but the devout breathing of a ſoul ſtruck with a ſenſe of its own miſery and of the

infinite

infinite holineſs of Him whom it is addreſſing; experimentally convinced of its own emptineſs and of the abundant fulneſs of God. It is the complete renunciation of ſelf, and entire dependence on another. It is the voice of the beggar who would be relieved; of the ſinner who would be pardoned. It has nothing to offer but ſin and *ſorrow*; nothing to aſk but forgiveneſs and acceptance; nothing to plead but the promiſes of the Goſpel in the death of Chriſt. It never ſeeks to obtain its object by diminiſhing the guilt of ſin, but by exalting the merits of the Saviour.

But as it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections as well as to *ſanctify* them, the benevolent Chriſtian is not ſatisfied to commend himſelf alone to the divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God will overflow with love to its neighbour. All that are near to himſelf he wiſhes to bring near to God. He will preſent the whole human race as objects of the

the divine compaſſion, but eſpecially the faithful followers of Jeſus Chriſt. Religion makes a man ſo liberal of ſoul, that he cannot endure to reſtrict any thing, much leſs divine mercies, to himſelf: he therefore ſpiritualizes the ſocial affections, by adding interceſſory to perſonal prayer: for he knows, that petitioning for others is one of the beſt methods of exerciſing and enlarging our own love and charity, even if it were not to draw down thoſe bleſſings which are promiſed to thoſe for whom we aſk them. It is unneceſſary to produce any of the numberleſs inſtances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of interceſſion: in which God has proved the truth of his own aſſurance that "his ear was open to their cry." I ſhall confine myſelf to a few obſervations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it.— When we pray for the objects of our deareſt regard, it purifies paſſion, and exalts love into religion: when we pray for thoſe with whom we have worldly intercourſe,

course, it ſmooths down the ſwellings of envy, and bids the tumults of anger and ambition ſubſide: when we pray for our country, it ſanctifies patriotiſm: when we pray for thoſe in authority, it adds a divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it ſoftens the ſavageneſs of war, and mollifies hatred into tenderneſs, and reſentment into ſorrow. And we can only learn the duty ſo difficult to human nature, of forgiving thoſe who have offended us, when we bring ourſelves to pray for them to Him whom we ourſelves daily offend. When thoſe who are the faithful followers of the ſame Divine Maſter pray for each other, the reciprocal interceſſion delightfully realizes that beautiful idea of "the communion of Saints." There is ſcarcely any thing which more enriches the Chriſtian than the circulation of this holy commerce; than the comfort of believing, while he is praying for his Chriſtian friends, that he is alſo reaping the benefit of their prayers for him.

Some are for confining their interceſſions only to the good, as if none but perſons of merit were entitled to our prayers. Merit! who has it? Deſert! who can plead it? in the ſight of God, I mean. Who ſhall bring his own piety, or the piety of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of ſuch tranſcendant holineſs, that "the heavens are not clean in his ſight?" And if we wait for perfect holineſs as a preliminary to prayer, when ſhall ſuch erring creatures pray *at all* to HIM "who "chargeth the Angels with folly!"

In cloſing this little work with the ſubject of interceſſory prayer, may the Author be allowed to avail herſelf of the feeling it ſuggeſts to her own heart? And while ſhe earneſtly implores that Being, who can make the meaneſt of his creatures inſtrumental to his glory, to bleſs this humble attempt to thoſe for whom it was written, may ſhe, without preſumption, entreat that this work of Chriſtian Charity may be reciprocal, and that thoſe who peruſe theſe

pages

pages may put up a petition for her, that in the great day to which we are all haften-ing, fhe may not be found to have fug-gefted to others what fhe herfelf did not believe, or to have recommended what fhe did not defire to practife? In that awful day of everlafting decifion, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and ac-cepted, "not for any works of righteouf-"nefs which they have done," but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

THE END.

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